PAINTING & COLLECTING MINIATURE FIGURES
FOR ROLE PLAYING GAMES

Stewart Parkinson

HEROES FOR WARGAMES

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PRODUCED BY MARTYN DEAN

A Dragon's World Ltd Imprint

Dragon's World Ltd
High Street
Limpsfield
Surrey RH8 0DY
Great Britain

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Art edited, designed and produced by
Martyn Dean
Front cover art by Melvyn Grant
Back cover art by Bob Naismith

Special thanks to John Blanche. Without his help and contribution this book would not have been possible.

The publishers thank Games Workshop Ltd, Citadel Miniatures Ltd and in particular Brian Ansell, for their time, the use of their studios and the generous access they gave us to artwork and figurines

Hardback: ISBN 1 85028 028 2
Limpback: ISBN 1 85028 027 4
Printed in Singapore

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

STEWART PARKINSON	European Sales Manager for Games Workshop Ltd.
JOHN BLANCHE	Illustrator, Figure designer, Sculptor and Figure painter. Design Studio Manager for Games Workshop Ltd. and Art Editor of White Dwarf and Warlock magazines.
KEVIN ADAMS	Figure designer, Sculptor and Figure painter.
SIMON FILE	Conceived the idea of this book.
TONY ACKLAND	Illustrator, Sculptor and Figure painter.
DAVE ANDREWS	Illustrator and Figure painter.
NICK BIBBY	Illustrator, Sculptor and Figure painter.
COLIN DIXON	Figure painter.
CHARLIE ELLIOT	Figure painter.
JES GOODWIN	Illustrator and Sculptor.
ALY MORRISSON	Illustrator, Sculptor and Figure painter.
TRISH MORRISSON	Sculptor and Figure painter.
BOB NAISMITH	Illustrator and Sculptor.
ALAN & MICHAEL *THE TWINS* PERRY	Sculptors and Figure painters.

Orc Attack, John Blanche.

Dwarf Lords of Legend, John Blanche.

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Regiments of Renown, John Blanche.

Knight of Law, Tony Ackland.

INTRODUCTION

We live in a world which, through the sophistication of technology, encourages specialisation. We are expected to pursue one employment, to finely hone our skills at our chosen job. The engineer, architect and surgeon each fit neatly into the system without any real appreciation of the other's job and yet relying on them for their expertise in times of need. To be a Jack-of-all-Trades is to be Master of none.

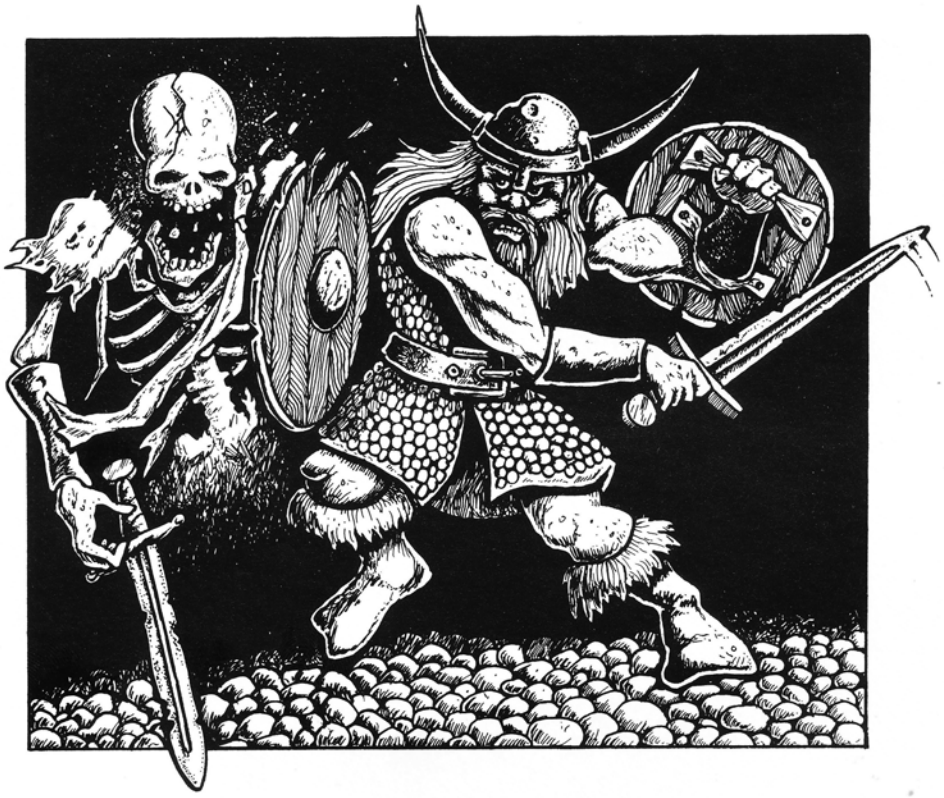
It is refreshing then to see people developing new skills through their hobby. Role-playing games, the pastime that has occupied our last ten years, still holds its original appeal. It encourages creative thinking, the development of writing skill, attention to detail and patience.

The figures shown in this book were born of a need in the games themselves, and yet they have acted as a bridge for many people into a new form of art. The dedication with which they pursue their hobby demonstrates that rather than simply accepting the limitations of rules they are experiencing pleasure by attempting to paint. Their patience is well rewarded by the beautiful results that may be achieved.

This book is not simply a collection of photographs of miniatures painted by acknowledged masters; it is a book which details the methods involved in painting. We hope that this will encourage readers to try their hand at what can be a fascinating pastime.

Ian Livingstone
Steve Jackson

Cthulho Inferno, John Blanche.



ROLE PLAYING GAMES

Metal soldiers have had a place in civilisation since earliest times. In fact, as soon as the casting process was developed miniature figures were some of the first items produced. It is uncertain as to when they began to be used to represent actual battles – chess is in fact a battle between equal armies within restricted areas.

Toy soldiers have also served as decoration. The major problem with this in the past was that they tended to be only hand-sculpted, and the process was time consuming. Casting, although well developed, had difficulty coping with the mass production of figures containing a lot of detail. The decoration line has continued to the present day and figures were available in many different scales representing historical personalities, or simply styles of dress and soldiers in uniform through the ages. The interest today in fantasy figures is really a fast growing branch of a larger tree. Miniatures seem to have an irresistible attraction; the reason for this is probably buried deep under a host of psychological explanations. Perhaps it is a combination of their weight, colour and their depiction of miniature humanity?

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the military began to use three-dimensional counters and maps to train officers in strategic and tactical manoevres. The most famous of these, which became a game in its own right, was 'Kreigspiel', – literally 'War Game', used by the Prussian army. Rules were set and printed to ensure

Opposite: *Dwarf smashes Skeleton, Dave Andrews.*

Above: *Blood Bath at Orc's Drift game.*

consistency in the game, and enabled tests of skill between players from various groups, since a common reference point was available.

During the late 19th century more and more toy soldiers were being produced as molding and casting techniques were improved. Sometimes crude, sometimes beautifully painted, they were usually children's toys. Gradually the idea began to show that figures could stand in for the counters on a board game. H G Wells, in fact, wrote a set of rules called 'Little Wars', which gave different types of figures different sets of abilities and took the reader through such concepts as movement, morale and combat. The 'Figure Wargaming' hobby had arrived. War Games are still divided into the Board and Figurine camps with little interaction between them, and big disputes take place over the 'realism' of either system. Figure wargames, especially if played on well-produced terrain, are certainly the most attractive to look at and thus tend to be the primary factor in attracting would-be hobbyists. The pull of miniatures is also at work in the fantasy games area; it is estimated that 30 per cent of figures go to the collectors who have never played a game in their lives, but who at a later stage begin to move into this area through curiosity.

It is difficult to know where the hobby will head next. Collecting and Wargaming are fairly well established, and as sculptors gain experience so the standard of this miniature art increases. As yet there is little public

Left and above: *Adventurers, Barbarians, Heroes and Samurai.*

demand for three-dimensional art, such as the diorama, but this is beginning to change, albeit very slowly. Just as 'fantasy' pictures are an accepted art form, it may be that a market will develop for miniature models. The man-hours involved in their creation may, however, make them prohibitively expensive.

To some it became obvious that a living might be made in this new industry. From the middle of the 1960s figure companies began to spring up. They may well have only been crude casting works in garden sheds, but they were a beginning. More and more discussion was taking place between different groups of players with a view to improving rules and perhaps bringing a degree of standardisation to the hobby.

This standardisation was demonstrated in the gradual acceptance of a figure scale of 25 mm, if only because it allowed a reasonable amount of detail to be shown without using too much metal and therefore both occupying too much tabletop space and being too expensive. Figurines began to be produced covering all ages and historical periods. It was possible to acquire anything from a Persian Immortal to a Vietnam Marine.

In 1975 the seeds of a whole new hobby

Left and above: *Barbarians, Fools, Adventurers and Villagers.*

were sown. Two Americans, Gary Gygax and Brian Blume brought out a series of rules that were eventually to become 'Dungeons and Dragons'. It introduced a new concept to the gaming world – role-playing. As it was quite a radical idea it took some while for the public to grasp it. Once it did however the whole thing took off. In the game there was no longer a real need for a board. Each player took on the persona of a character in a fantasy world where just about anything was possible. Rules were not really rules but guidelines since it was never possible to cover every eventuality. The characters and the world in which they existed were contained only within the players' heads, and it was their imagination that brought the game alive. Each persona has certain characteristics which are derived randomly from dice rolls.

For instance, in the Dungeons and Dragons game, a player rolls three dice six times and notes the results. From these he can derive his character's strength, intelligence, wisdom, dexterity, constitution and charisma. The results dictate what character type the persona will be. The assets of high strength, dexterous speed, agility and constitution could be combined in the persona of a fearless barbarian warrior type sustaining his *machismo* with the aid of a chainmail loin-

Top left: *Thief in the night, Dave Andrews.*

Top right: *Stranger in town, Dave Andrews.*

Bottom left: *Zombie attack, Dave Andrews.*

cloth. Or they could be the virtues of an Arthurian character, sufficient to enable him – or her – to defeat a dragon.

One can also play a wizard, a thief or a warrior-priest. Each has different abilities essential for a group's survival. The most enjoyable part of the game is the interaction between the players. There is no winner in the sessions – an idea that beginners have difficulty in understanding.

The referee will previously have mapped out an area of imaginary terrain such as a deserted castle or old dungeon and filled this with appropriate denizens guarding secrets and treasure. The players, each with character equipped, armoured and ready, will

Warrior Knights game.

venture into these dangerous places and by a mixture of stealth, cunning and combat make their way out again considerably richer than when they went in. The game is a battle of wits against the referee. He can never lose – should he wish to, he can 'kill' any character that he wishes – after all, it's his universe. However, the pleasure of the group comes from interaction and intelligent use of available skills.

The better games allow for every possibility without clogging up game mechanics. As this is fantasy, one can encounter elves, dwarves, centaurs and satyrs, each with different capabilities. Characters can choose what sort of armour to wear, which weapons to carry, and which spells to memorize, each with different advantages and disadvantages.

The authors of some of the games have taken part in mediaeval battle re-enactments in order to bring a greater amount of realism to the games. For instance a small, fast unarmoured human with a short sword should be able to strike quickly but not do too much damage and if hit himself, not be able to withstand too much. A 6'5" barbarian, however, wearing chain mail and wielding a two-handed axe may be a mite slower but if he hits, the victim will know all about it! Different types of armour protect against different blows. The mediaeval mace for

Cosmic Encounter game.

instance, was developed primarily for use against opponents in plate armour. This was a set of steel plate moulded to the shape of the body. A mace was a lump of metal on a rod which meant that it could deliver a blow of tremendous power, especially against a rigid surface. The concussion of a hit could often in itself cause damage. A plain sword was not as effective against this type of armour as it had less concentrated weight and relied on its sharp blade to damage. A mace, however, would not be as good against cloth and studded, padded leather armour, which absorbs blows. A good set of rules would maintain the realistic impression of such details without slowing the pace.

An adventure proceeds with the players deciding upon a course of action and the referee replying with details as to what they see, or what the reactions are of other non-player characters in the scenario. The players are usually given a briefing before they begin, plus background information that their characters would know.

The following is an extract from a game. The party is made up of two fighters, a warrior priest, a barbarian and a thief. They have been hired to retrieve a certain purple crystal from the manse of a magician living some miles from the capital of the country in which they reside. Their patron, a seemingly bland and innocent middle-aged man will

only divulge that he needs the crystal to stay alive, and that the magician, Nardaal, is particularly susceptible to harm from wood.

The characters have made their way to the manse and, having emerged from a thicket, are rewarded with their first glimpse of the magician's abode.

Referee: As you emerge from the cover of the trees, you look up. In front of you is a small hillock covered in small bushes. Dusk is approaching but you can still see the many white flowers that dot these bushes as they seem to glow. On top of the hillock is a tall, thin building with a mushroom-shaped roof. From the top of this sticks a chimney leaning out at a crazy angle. A thin trail of smoke is coming from it. There are one or two windows in the walls, which are lit yellow except for the topmost one which is blue and occasionally flashes red.

Players: Dromond, the warrior, sheathes his sword, draws his bow and nocks an arrow. The barbarian and the thief move out in front and the others follow them as they head towards the mound. The barbarian and thief look intently around them, whilst the others keep their eyes on the building.

Referee: You go about two hundred yards and dark is falling rapidly when the thief sees something. (Here the player and referee enter into private discussion.) The thief motions you to stop.

Players: We stop, and Dromond prepares his bow to fire if necessary.

Referee: The thief motions you all to move on again. As you approach, he tells you that he saw two goblins armed with crossbows on the mound but they did not see you.

Players: We all loosen our weapons and move on again, slower this time and being more careful.

Referee: You reach the bottom of the mound without seeing anything else. The valley was filled with long harsh grass, whereas here the sward looks well-tended, and the bushes seem to have been recently pruned. The flowers that you saw give off a pungent smell reminiscent of sewers and really do seem to glow. As you make your way upwards you suddenly hear a couple of muffled shouts, a cry of anger and then a lot of laughing. The noise comes from close by on your right.

Players: Do we recognise the language?

Referee: It was harsh and guttural, possible goblinoid but you did not hear enough to recognise the exact type.

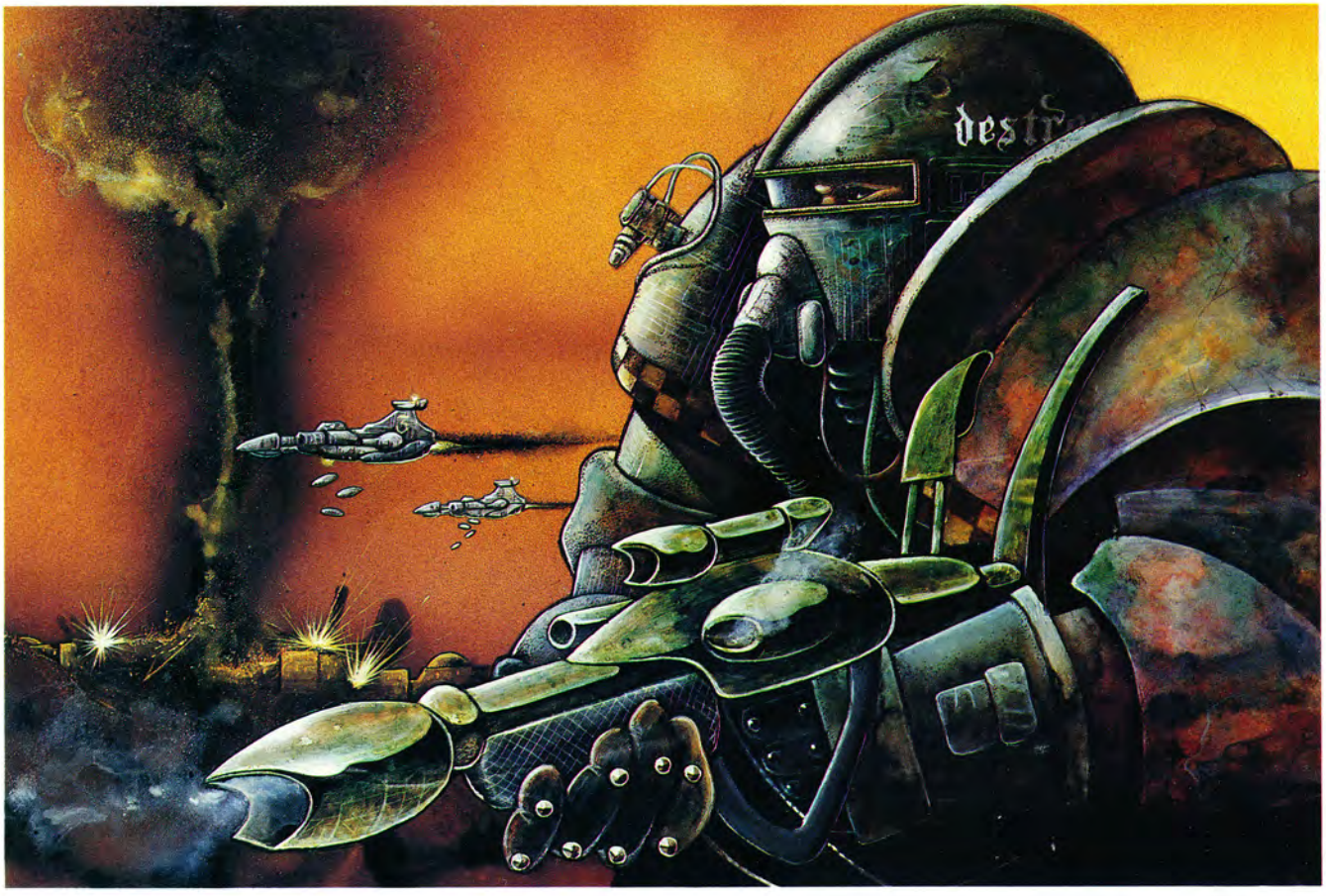
Players: The thief will sneak up . . .

Left and above: *Deep space mercenaries.*

Thief: Oh no I won't!

Players: The thief with the sword at his back will sneak up and see what is going on.

Referee: (to thief) OK, he does, and from the cover of a bush sees a roughly camouflaged opening in the mound. Sitting outside are three goblins, armoured in leather with chainmail sleeves and skirts and carrying an assortment of axes and polearms. Two are smoking very rough tobacco, and the third is scrabbling in the grass next to an upset pouch, much to the amusement of the others. The camou-



Imperial Trooper, Dave Andrews.

flaged hole is very dark and the goblins are obviously guarding it, though they do not yet suspect that anything is amiss.

The game would carry on in this fashion. The players may choose to attack the goblin guards and make their way into the mound, or ignore them completely and enter the manse. There are innumerable options and possibilities, and all are open since the referee can allow for any eventuality. The 'winning' of this particular session would be in the gaining of the purple crystal. However, the game would not be over since the characters are still 'alive'. The only way to lose is for one's character to 'die' in which case one can create another by rolling the dice.

As previously said, no board is necessary for play. It is, however, convenient to have some kind of floor plan and counters to define exactly where characters are standing. This avoids the 'I can shout loudest therefore I was at the back when the Dragon came into the room' syndrome. It also helps when the nasty goblins drop the huge net on part of the group or when the hidden trapdoor springs open to drop the unfortunate victim several hundred feet to the floor below.

Metal figurines were perfect to fill the gap for counters. Since players identified more intensely with their character they wanted a miniature with more detail than had previously existed. In 1975 one-legged, one-eyed dwarves in chainmail carrying axes were somewhat thin on the ground. As a

Above left and right: *Judge Dredd characters including a 'scratch' built vehicle.*

Opposite: *Judge Dredd game.*

sideline some companies began to bring out 'fantasy' armies as well as their more traditional lines and to their surprise found that these unconventional miniatures sold very well. So well in fact that some companies stopped making historical figures altogether in favour of fantasy miniatures.

Many of the original companies are long gone but the most successful of all began as yet another back-room operation. Bryan Ansell, a very well known name in the games world, decided that his talents would be best employed in the figure business. Since he could sculpt and enjoyed doing so then why not take it up full-time? Using virtually anything as raw material, the new enterprise was born. Compared to the figures available today, the early results can only be called crude, and yet sculptors rapidly improved and their efforts, now reproduced in metal, were snapped up by eager collectors and gamers. Citadel Miniatures was growing the fastest of all. A merger with the famous games company Games Workshop only helped and with Bryan Ansell still there as Managing Director the figures hobby became more and more firmly established.

Fantasy is not the only area covered by role-playing games and figures. If one can be an armoured hero killling dragons, then why not a brave pilot 2,000 years into the future, stretching the boundaries of known space? Games exist covering science-fiction, gothic horror, Tolkien's writings and many more.

The game 'Pendragon' is an example of how imagination can expand what already

GAME MASTER'S BOOK
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Above left and right: *Killer Robots and Mutant Psychos.*

exists. Based on the tales of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table the players take on the characters of heroes from those far-off legends. Even the adaption of present day morality has been catered for. Arthurian knights would, after all, care more for honour and less for social equality than people nowadays. A points system rewards good role-playing and encourages players to think themselves into the feeling of the times. Many details are covered, from heraldry to heroes, by way of villains, castles, cottages and peasants, not forgetting the questing beast.

Figures have in fact been produced for just about every type of character available,

Above left and right: *Judge Dredd characters, city lowlifes and death squad.*

which has led to another facet in the figure world – that of collecting. At present there are around thirty new figure designs coming out each month. They have only a short shelf life – around six months or so, – before they are replaced by yet more miniatures. There has as yet been no attempt to catalogue the figures that have so far appeared, nor unfortunately is there a repository of the various figures produced. It may be that in the future such an undertaking may take place but there are no plans as yet.

Because of the innate attractiveness of the miniatures many people simply collect them through the human urge to collect without any thought of painting them.

FANTASY BATTLES

Role-playing games originated from wargames roots. Now, with the production of enormous quantities of different fantasy figures the process has come full circle – there are now rules for fantasy wargames.

The latest 'pure' wargames rules allow for many eventualities – weather, time of year, effectiveness of weapons, troop training and so on. Were enough miniatures available one could easily recreate the whole of the Battle of Waterloo, man for man. These rules are realistic, original and cleverly put together, but they have difficulty engendering the same excitement as a dwarven hanglider attack.

Fantasy tabletop battles are primarily meant to be fun. In most sets of rules constricting guidelines have been ruthlessly hacked away to give a clean and entertaining approach to gaming. In theory, with all else being equal, the better player should still win. All tabletop units have combat and movement capabilities but every unit also has a special ability or suffers some deficiency.

In traditional wargames, each figure usually represents more than one man – often a miniature will be the equivalent of 25 – 50 due to the huge size of regiments and the small size of playing surfaces. In fantasy battles there is no such restriction – one figure equals one man, goblin, orc, dragon or

Forces of Fantasy, John Blanche.

Revenge of the Lichemaster, John Blanche.

Above: *Dungeon floor plans.*

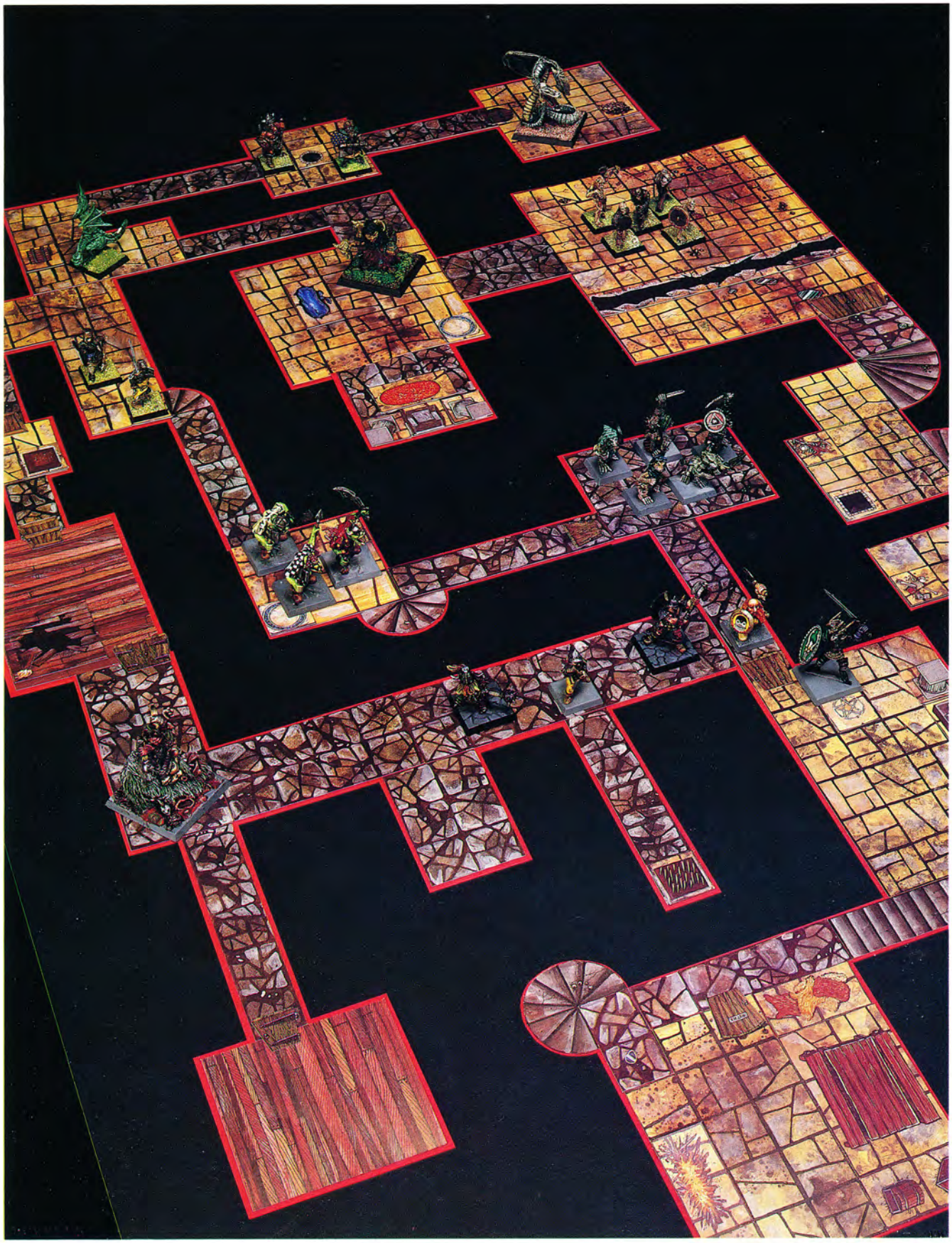
Opposite: *Dungeon floor plans with combatants in position.*

whatever, and this allows a greater degree of identification by the players. A fantasy battle does not need hundreds and hundreds of expensive models but simply a little effort.

There are various types of armies available – Goblin hoards, Orcish war parties, Dwarven bands, Elven hosts or even Insubstantial Undead. Each have their own leaders, shield designs and banners to bring colour to the battlefield. There are no set colour schemes, as one can paint whatever one likes. It is, after all, an imaginary world.

Even the terrain can reflect its fantastic origins. The Players Guild, a group of game fanatics who number amongst their other interests hitting each other with large lumps of metal, a pastime that they refer to as 'mediaeval combat re-enactment', take delight in producing beautiful fantasy battle landscapes. These are composed of dark gullies, caves and mines, forbidding crags, wide rivers and shallow streams, mountains, villages, castles, ships, dinghies, war machines, orcs on bicycles, mounted eagles, Orcish anti-aircraft batteries, in fact anything that could ever possibly be imagined and some things that could not without questioning the builder's sanity.

It is not difficult to make up regiments of figures, nor the terrain on which to use them. Nor need it be expensive: most Guild equipment is made from household rubbish and although it requires work, a few attempts should quickly hone the necessary skills. Castle towers can be made from kitchen roll tubes and walls from polystyrene. Paint and



Chaos Knight, Dave Andrews.

Chronicle Orcs, Tony Ackland.

polyfilla fill cracks and gaps, both in reality and in the imagination. Imagination can build much onto the familiar style of instruction: 'take two washing-up liquid bottles and some double-sided sticky-tape . . . .'

Although fantasy battles are fun, they can soon pall. It is alright to win once but sometimes one would like to take profits from victory, or find some reason not to throw in all the reserves to stave off defeat, or even to have a 'battle to end all battles.' Although the Orcish commander may dislike the concept of manoeuvre, if only for the reason that his troops cannot even pronounce it, there should be opportunities for encirclement, ambush and outflanking. This is where the campaign comes in.

Campaigns are a series of movements, both tactical and strategic that culminate in battles to decide some issue, whether territorial or otherwise. They can be run by two players, many players or with a referee to adjudicate. The use of a referee is always to be recommended. One can try to be impartial, but when one's left flank is in danger of imminent collapse it is easy to fall into heated debate as to whether hobbits are small enough to count ploughed furrows as hard cover. Campaigns with a series of battles are the ideal breeding ground for inter-unit rivalry, the use of novel battle-cries and insults, the collection of scalps and the increase in size and glory of unit flags and standards. If one unit captures another battle flag, then why not add part of it to their own? This practice can be used on the figures

Psychostyrene Dwarves, John Blanche.

Drastik Plastik Orcs, John Blanche.

themselves by constructing flags for use on the table – a surprisingly easy practice.

An inordinate amount of time may be invested in the setting up of a campaign. The more attention you give to it, the greater the enjoyment of the game. All that you need are enough figures for reasonably sized battles, some terrain and a set of rules.

The best way to start is to draw up a map with villages, rivers, hills and mountains all filled in. This geography can be as fantastic as desired, though common sense should be employed – rivers, after all, very rarely flow uphill. Some reason should then be invented for a conflict, and just who is fighting whom should be decided. Of course, the number and type of figurines available will affect this decision. However, a regiment of goblins can easily stand in for a regiment of black orcs with a little bit of imagination. Each side's starting positions are then decided, and the game begins. Units would be able to move a certain distance each day, use up a certain amount of provisions and be liable to various negative factors for each day away from home in order to make generals seek combat fairly soon. The game otherwise turns into a sort of merry-go-round, each side circling the other, unwilling to make the first move. Finally a set of victory conditions should be fixed so that one side can be said to have won without having to totally annihilate the other's forces. Additional detail can then be filled in by the referee and players – special conditions imposed, weather on particular days decided – a whole host of minor points.

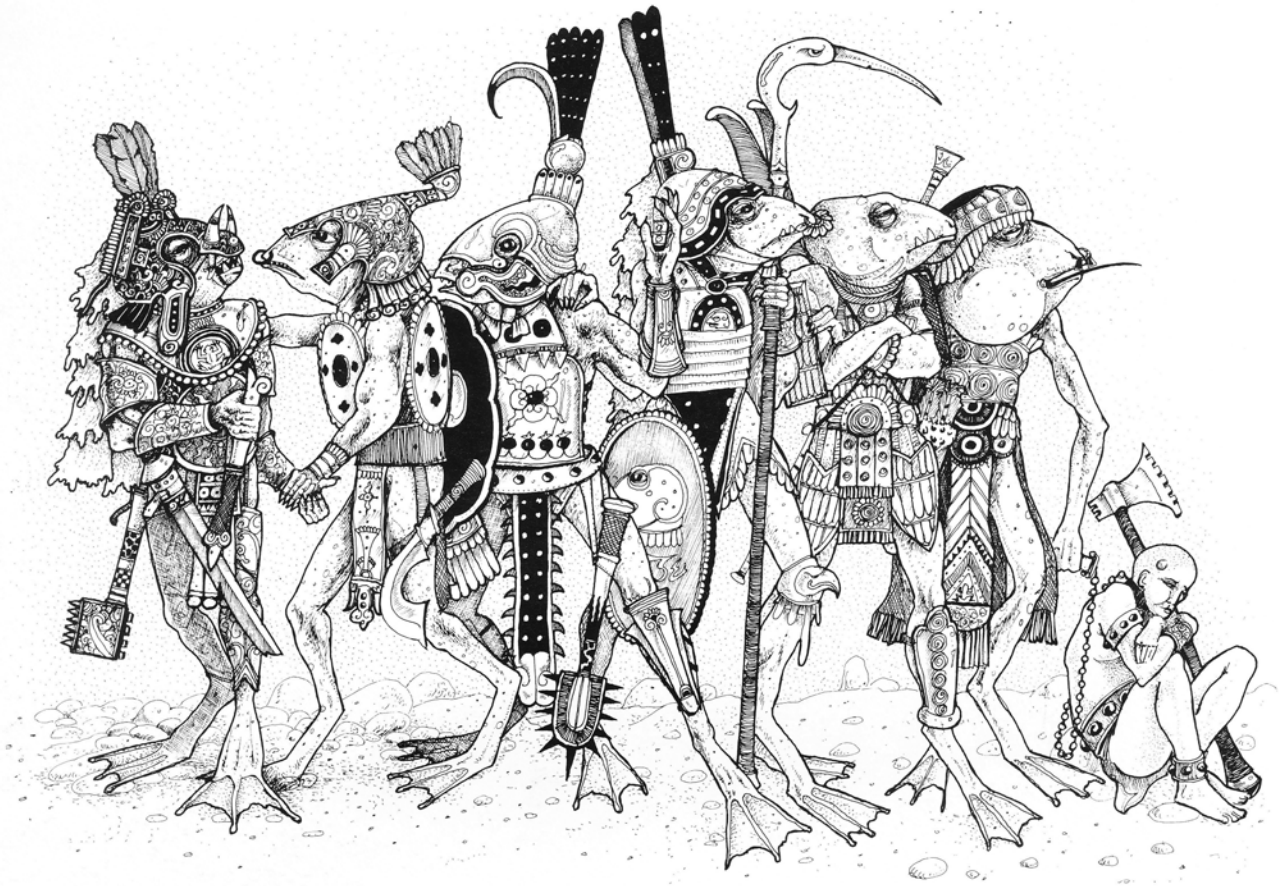
Above and left: *Orc irregular army with standard bearer.*

The great orcish leader strode forward from the pack of creatures that formed his bodyguard. Before him stood the gates and walls of the dwarvish stronghold. He knew that many eyes were looking at him through thin enbrasures and that many nervous fingers were being tightened around crossbow triggers. He shouted at those accursed gates: 'Now you see my power! Will you not surrender? You will be spared much pain!'

The only answer was a red-feathered crossbow bolt that struck the ground before him. Mashrak turned, 'Goddammed stunties! I knew that trick wouldn't work. Always does in the comic books though'.

Above and right: *Orc irregular army with standard bearer.*

And thus began the Battle at the Dwarven Gate, where a sea of orcs beseiged the stronghold at Holden Pass and due to the sudden arrival of huge numbers of dwarven reinforcements, the evil horde was wiped out almost to a man. Mashrak only survived by falling over 'dead' as the dwarves swept forward, then picking himself up and running away as fast as orcishly possible. He did not forget his defeat however, nor the way that the dwarves had laughed at him from behind their gates, and he plotted and planned, and watched and learned, until he knew what went on behind those doors. Over the years, because he was so much bigger than anyone else, he pulled another



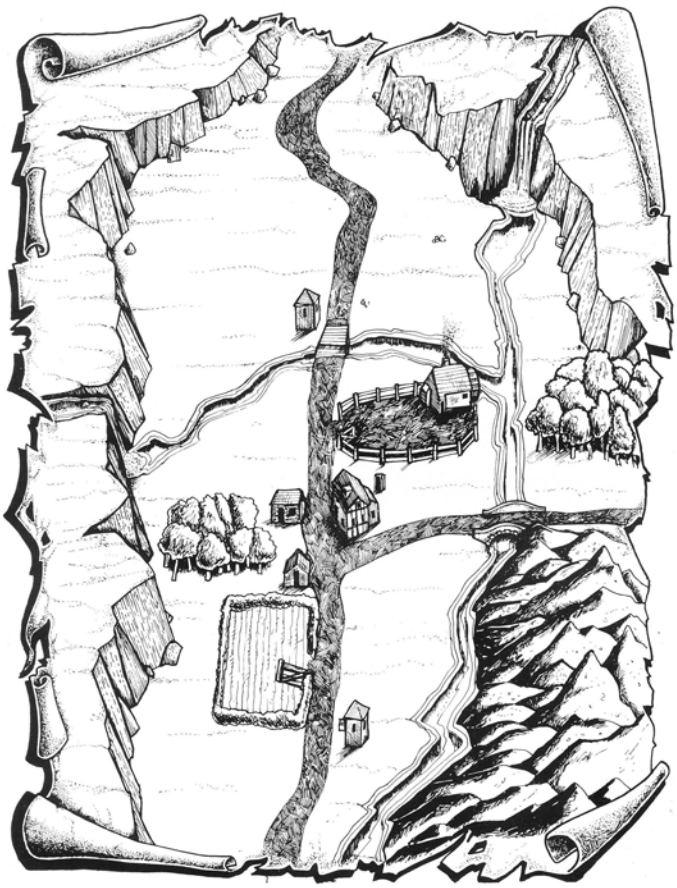
Slann frogmen warriors, John Blanche.

army together and prepared himself for another assault on the dwarven fortifications. This time however, he reckoned that he had forseen everything.

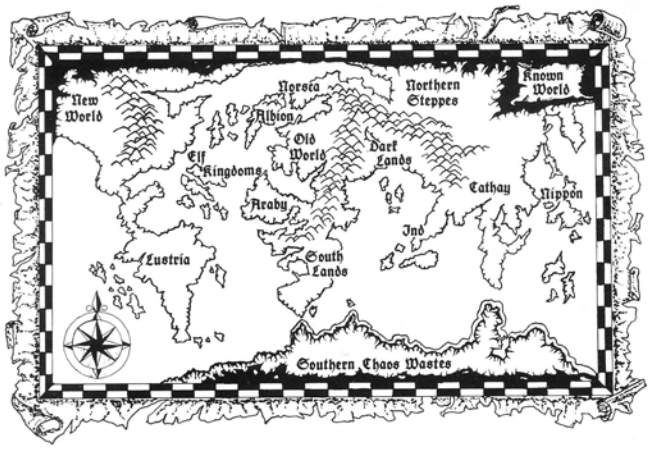
The above is a typical introduction to a battle. The forces are traditional enemies: orcs and dwarves, whose emnity stretches back over long, long years. The reason for the battle is also explained: revenge! This is a good enough excuse for any imaginable atrocity, at which orcs are particularly inventive. Each general in this particular instance was given a series of objectives and a background history for his particular characters and forces, and told to act accordingly. Each side had three commanders, two being under theoretical control of the third. A referee was appointed to adjudicate, the terrain set out and the game begun.

Many battles take place on large fields, this one being different in that it was conducted underground. It therefore became more personalised, as one hero holding a doorway for several turns could decisively affect the whole course of the skirmish. The background to that battle was simple. There is a winner and a loser, and after all is done the troops are packed away and the players sit down for some well-earned refreshment. In an effort, however, to give more meaning to these set-pieces, a campaign can be set up.

In Washammer, a Known World has been put together, loosely based on our planet. It is inhabited by various races and is the scene of many conflicts. The main difference in the



Above: *Battle site map, Dave Andrews.*



Top right: *Village at night, Dave Andrews.*

Centre right: *Dwarf miners, Dave Andrews.*

Bottom right: *Skeleton irregulars, Dave Andrews.*

cartography is that the North and South Poles have been replaced by 'Unknown Territory'. It is rumoured that some time long in the past the Slann came to earth from far away. The Slann are powerful frog-like creatures who use lobotomised humans for their slaves and armies. It is said that they

Orcs.

arrived and departed from the planet through some kind of holes in the dimensions, at the top and bottom of the Known World. At some point there was a disaster or accident, and bits of matter from the other dimensions managed to slip in through these broken contacts. Exactly what happened is not known for sure, but what is certain is that from both North and South, Chaos creatures appear, seeking to cause death and destruction.

A campaign can centre around any continent, and is most effective when a good storyline has been put together to give an excuse for a battle. These story lines are easy to construct and do help since the further the story goes, the more ideas will be prompted.

If necessary one can put together family trees for the various combatants, so that the conflict can be carried over for generations! Banners, flags, battle cries, all can be made up for regiments and altered as they defeat the opposition. Names can be changed; this actually happened in real life, and names of regiments and their insignia were altered or added if they achieved a decisive victory over some renowned enemy.

The terrain that is available can also dictate

Dwarves.

what kind of a campaign can be run. A range of cardboard houses have become available which allow the putting together of realistic villages without the exorbitant expense that this previously entailed. Street-fighting makes for a whole different series of tactics though it may necessitate the devising of some new rules. Decide on these before the game actually starts or things will degenerate into a shouting match as each commander tries to convince the referee of his point of view in order to gain advantage.

If you really can't think of a storyline, then look to films or literature. Scenarios that have already appeared have gone under the titles 'The Magnificent Seven', 'Blood Bath at Orcs Drift' and 'McDeath'. The latter, based on Shakespeare's play of nearly the same name is nearly as tragic as the original work. Written by Richard Halliwell, it plagiarises this masterpiece of the English language and pits such opponents as the McEwman clan versus the McArnos and the Greevants. Heroes go under the names of Een McWrecker, Donalbane and, of course, McDeath. The idea behind the story is to get over the sometimes two-dimensional aspect of tabletop games and have fast, complex

Opposite: *Midgath, Lady McDeath and Dart of Harkness, John Blanche.*

Left: *Undead horseman and Skeleton fighters.*

battles in a maze-like castle.

One can easily turn any story into a battle scenario. With the injection of a little humour and imagination they can be a lot of fun. Make sure that each side has an objective somewhat more complex than simply annihilating the enemy and see that the combatants are at least a little equal in numbers and ability. However, this does not always have to be adhered to. Small forces in good defensive positions armed with long range weapons can hold off a far larger force. Just make sure that it is interesting to do so, and amusement should naturally follow.

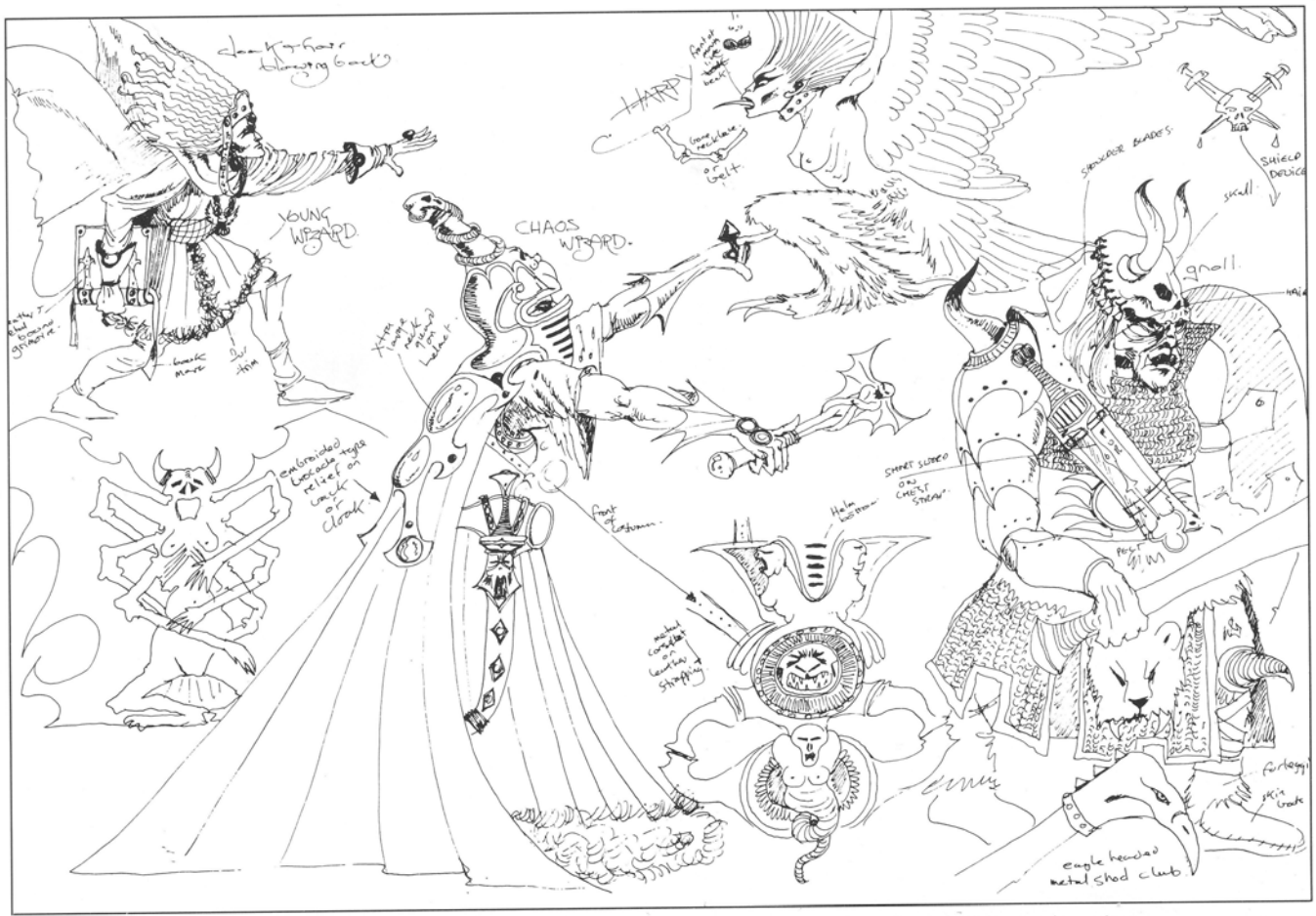
FIGURE MAKING

Figure-making is a complex process requiring years of practice to perfect. It requires a knowledge of anatomy and an understanding of movement to transform a tin soldier into a miniature sculpture. As many artists have noted, one needs to observe nature before producing fantasy art that remains 'real'.

A figure is produced in stages which have by now become fairly well-defined. The initial idea is transformed into a sketch, showing the character from two different angles defining the pose, equipment and expression of the personage. Many things inspire this drawing – the visualisation of a hero or anti-hero from a novel, artwork from comic strips and painting – maybe even an attempt at a caricature of a friend or the likeness of a well-known person.

The resultant drawings are passed on to the designers. Each, of course, has his own particular style, which lends itself to a certain kind of figure. An example of this is the work of the famous American designer, Tom Meier. He favours an approach which accentuates accuracy and proportion, and thus his ranges of miniatures can seem thin and delicate when compared to other, more robust designs. This style does, however, lend itself to the sculpting of elven characters. Traditionally these creatures have been fair and far more graceful than the bulkier humans.

Whatever the figure is to be the sculptor needs a base from which to work. The most common method of providing this is to make up a basic skeleton formed of intertwined



Opposite: *Aly Morrisson working on a new range of creatures.*

Above: *Wizards and their familiars, concept sheet, John Blanche.*

wire set in a base which allows easy handling. This skeleton can be positioned so as to give the guidelines for the putty from which the figure is sculpted.

A coarse putty is added to the wire to form the bulk of the figure. Various mediums are used, from plasticene to the easily malleable modeller's putties which are usually composed of two materials similar to polyester or epoxy based resin, like fibre glass resin or car filler. These, once mixed, give the sculptor a set period of time in which to work before they set solid. Putties often have properties that change during the hardening process allowing the modeller to achieve new and unusual effects.

Once this building up process has been completed detail begins to be added. A finer putty is used which has a consistency most easily likened to that of chewing gum. Small rolls of putty are applied to the frame and are pushed and prodded into shape. For this, dentists' tools have proved to be some of the most useful implements though sculptors will often make their own devices to suit their particular styles.

Detail is built up beginning with those areas which will be partly covered, for example, a pair of trousers over which will be placed scabbards and bags. Gradually the sculpture is refined. It is during this process that the figure may begin to change from the initial sketch as the designer adds bits and pieces which occur to him during the construction. Finally weapons and fine details appear. Weapons are often made from the

Top left: *Jes Goodwin fixing arms on a new figure.*

Bottom left: *Jes Goodwin's work place.*

Top right: *Trish Morrisson's workbench, dragons in progress.*

coarser putty, shaped in a rough fashion and left to dry. After curing, the exact likeness can be carved with a craft knife and sanded down to create a much smoother finish. The best way to illustrate this process is to go through the actual production of one figure, from conception to finish.

The figure envisaged is a fair elfin female warrior in long, flowing robes, bearing sword and shield plus a helmet with an elaborate crest. A wire skeleton is prepared. As the figure is fairly static the base is simply upright. The bulk is now added. It is far better to add little rather than much as, once set, the putty can be very difficult to remove without damaging the overall structure of the model.

Once the putty has set, detail is added. The robes are the first item to be made. The folds are achieved by pressing into the putty and then smoothing the raised areas. It is difficult to offer detailed advice at this point. The best guide that any sculptor has is their knowledge of how cloth hangs and to try to reproduce this effect in miniature.

The torso is now formed, gradually marking in finer detail as the medium hardens. Next comes the face, always one of the most difficult areas to sculpt. People are very sensitive to the symmetry of a face; after all we spend most of our life looking at them and we recognise the salient points on a subconscious level. Thus, if any area on the face is incorrect, especially the eyes, then the viewer knows that something is 'wrong', though not exactly what.

Top left: *Tony Ackland producing artwork for a magazine.*

Top right: *Bob Naismith resident alchemist turns gold into lead.*

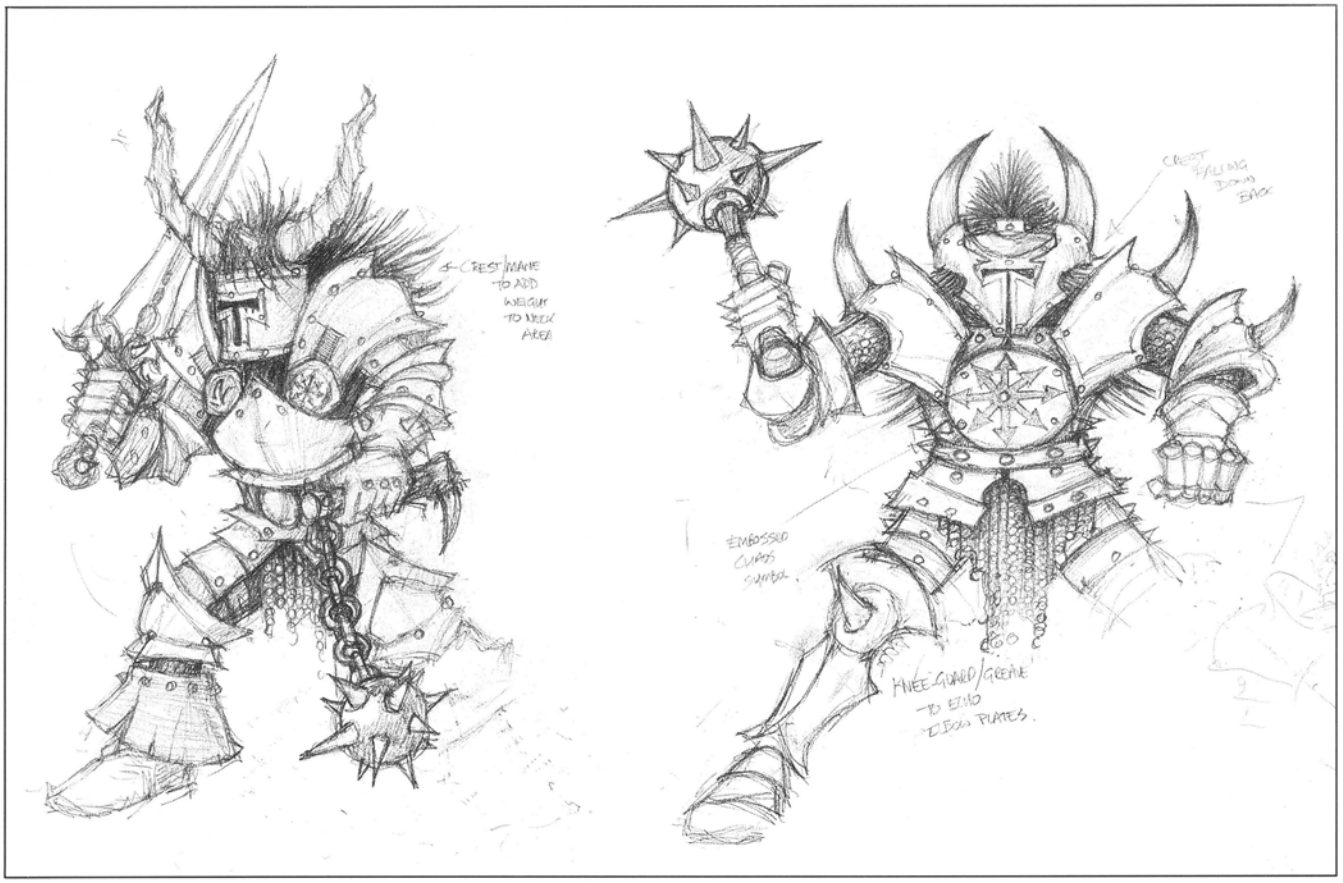
Bottom right: *Bob's workplace.*

It is a good idea after having completed a part of the model to let it set. There is nothing more infuriating than obliterating detail that has taken hours to perfect due simply to the careless touch of a finger. Be careful of fingerprints too – they are virtually impossible to remove once the putty has hardened. Finally shield, sword and helmet are moulded and left to dry. The sword is sanded down to give a smooth surface and the figure is finished.

Designers will often use short cuts to shorten the manufacturing time of a model, especially if working to a schedule. For example, one backpack is much like another, so why keep making different ones? The answer is to make a few types then make a mould. This can be used over and over again to produce an endless supply of backpacks. This method is particularly useful if a regiment is being constructed. There is no need to keep making the same shield design or helmet, since one is all you need for a mould.

The finished model, if required for commerical production, is taken and a mould is made. This is done by very carefully placing the model between two pieces of rubber and applying heat and pressure. The result is a two part mould with every ridge and recess mirrored in reverse in the shell. During the process the model is destroyed and so the mould-making has to be perfect or the likeness will be lost forever.

From this mould several figures are taken by pouring in molten metal and allowing it to cool. All of this is done under strictly



Warriors of Chaos, concept drawings, Jes Goodwin.

controlled conditions and can be extremely dangerous if tried without the proper equipment. The resulting figures made from a very hard metal are known as 'masters'. They are then used to make more moulds from which come the final white metal soldiers.

The whole process requires a high degree of skill which a machine can never achieve with the result that every figure produced has been handcast. Despite this, there are around thirty new fantasy-type figures issued per month throughout Britain. By far the biggest producer is Citadel Miniatures, based in Nottingham, who employ eleven full-time designers. The figures business is now indeed world-wide as large sales in Europe and the Far East demonstrate.

A designer, when sculpting, is usually given concepts for some twenty to twenty-five figures at one time, so that whole ranges may be made up at once. This does not mean that special articles cannot be made – some of the Limited Edition castings recently issued have included film stars, demented Scotsmen and Halfling gladiators.

The fact that all figures from a master come out the same can be off-putting but there are ways of personalising them. More complicated changes are discussed in the 'Conversions' section later in this book but the following basic techniques may be employed.

Any spare or unusual items found by the modeller should be hoarded. Beads, small broken chains, small drawing pins and pieces of old models can be, and are, used by

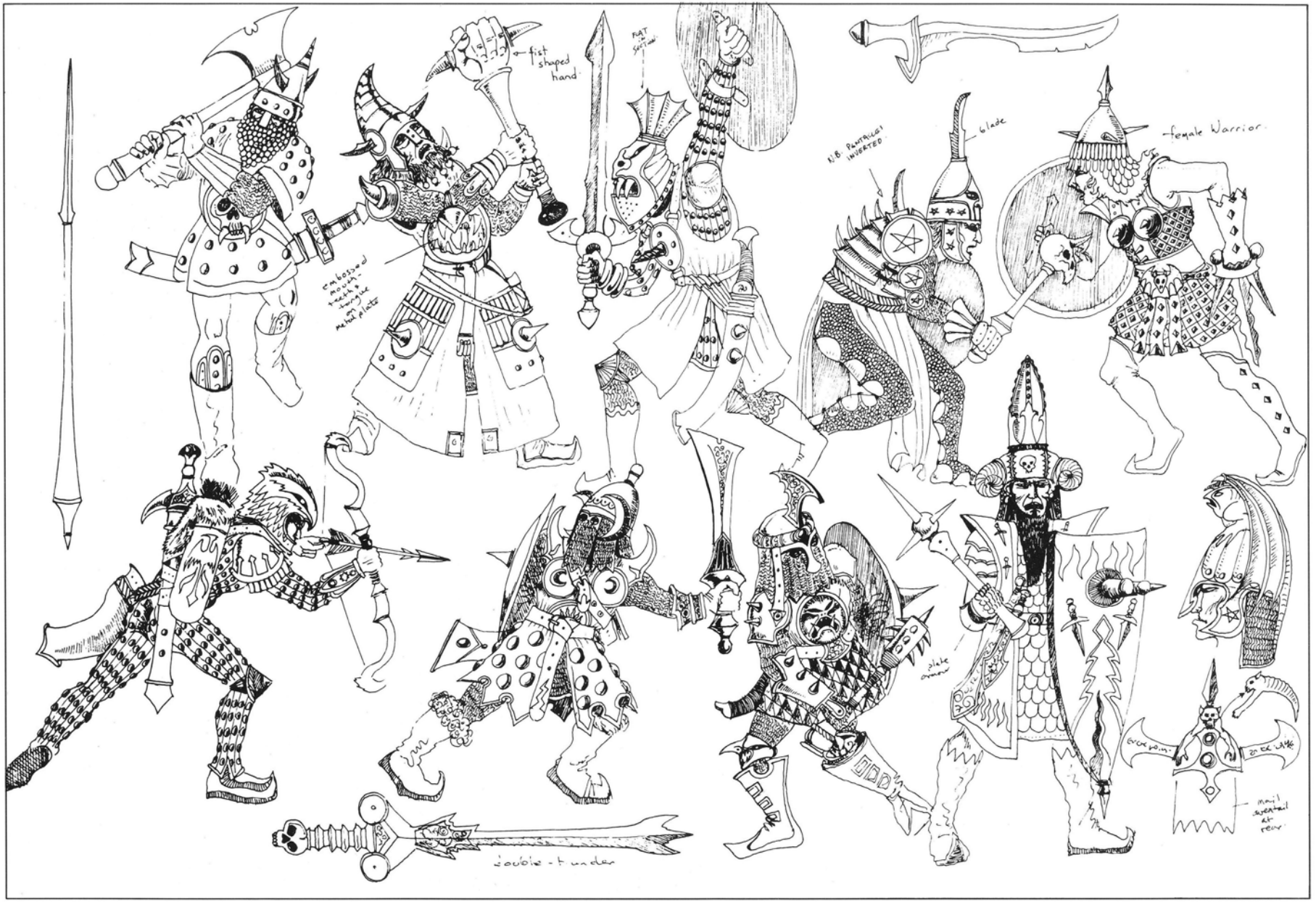
Chaos Warrior and Chaos Sorceror, concept drawings, Jes Goodwin.

professional designers and there is no reasons why the amateur cannot follow the same technique. Modelling putty is easily available – the practice of making small packs or helmet crests soon leads to a knowledge of what can and cannot be done with the various fickle mediums.

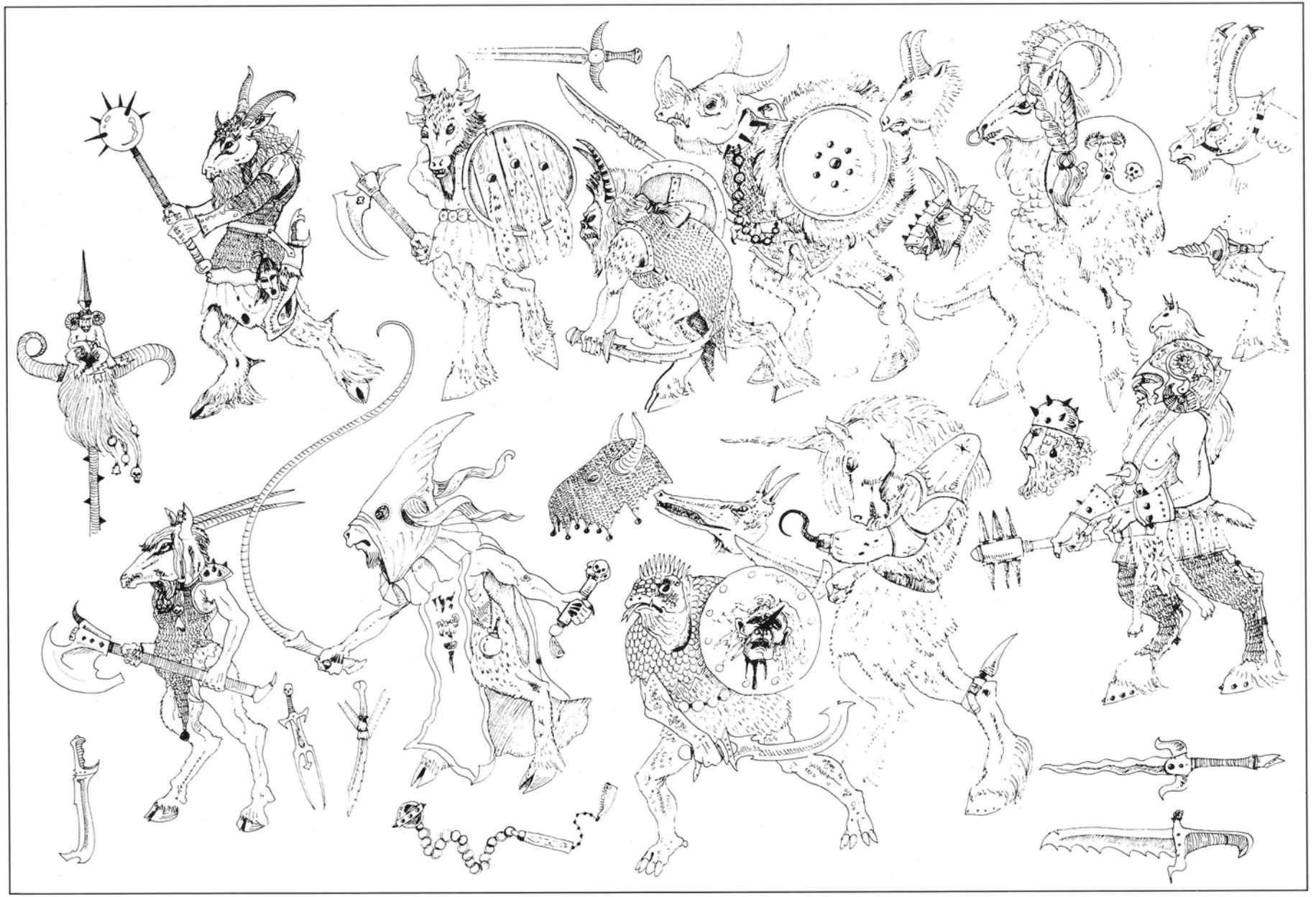
For the ambitious, a good project is to build up a figure from scratch. The reason putty is used for figures is that once this sets hard, a mould can easily be made from it. There is no reason however for using it if this hardness is not necessary. One of the best mediums to use is plasticene. It is cheap, malleable and hardens quite solid when cold. A covering of varnish ensures a tough surface.

Start, as the professionals do, with a rough sketch, beginning with 'pin' figures, a good base from which to work. Build up the figure as previously described. At the end of the session apply a layer of gloss varnish to preserve the work. Good tools to use include needles, the butt end of brushes and pencils, all of which give different textures if properly used. The modelling putty 'Milli-put' may also come in handy, but be careful – at one time everybody used it until it was discovered that it was absorbed by the skin. Gradually a toxic build-up occurs which can result in painful rashes and peeling of affected areas.

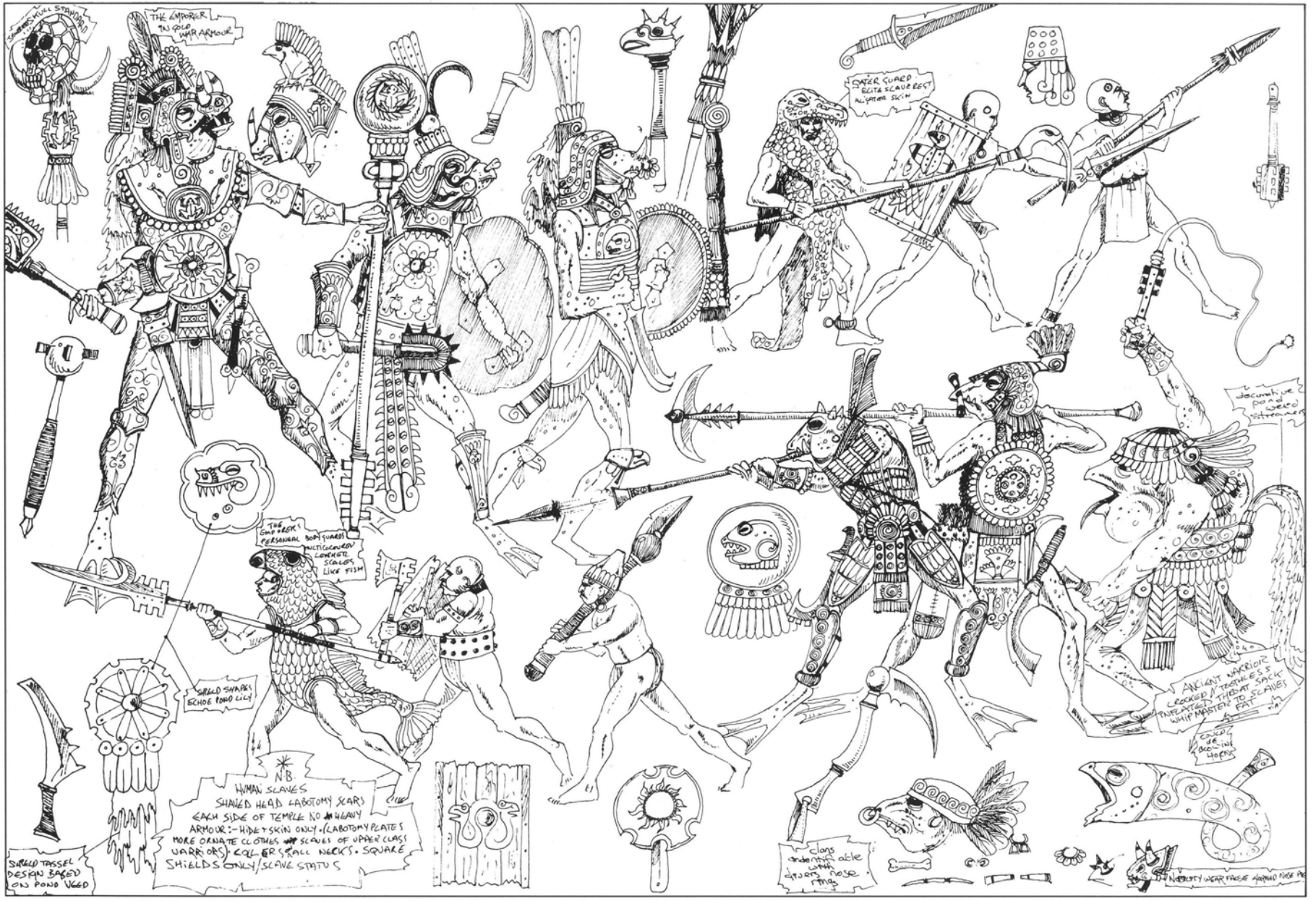
Overall, the most important points to bear in mind are that practice makes perfect, and that those designers who now seem to produce beautiful figures with disproportionate ease, all started in the same way.



Warriors of Chaos *John Blanche*



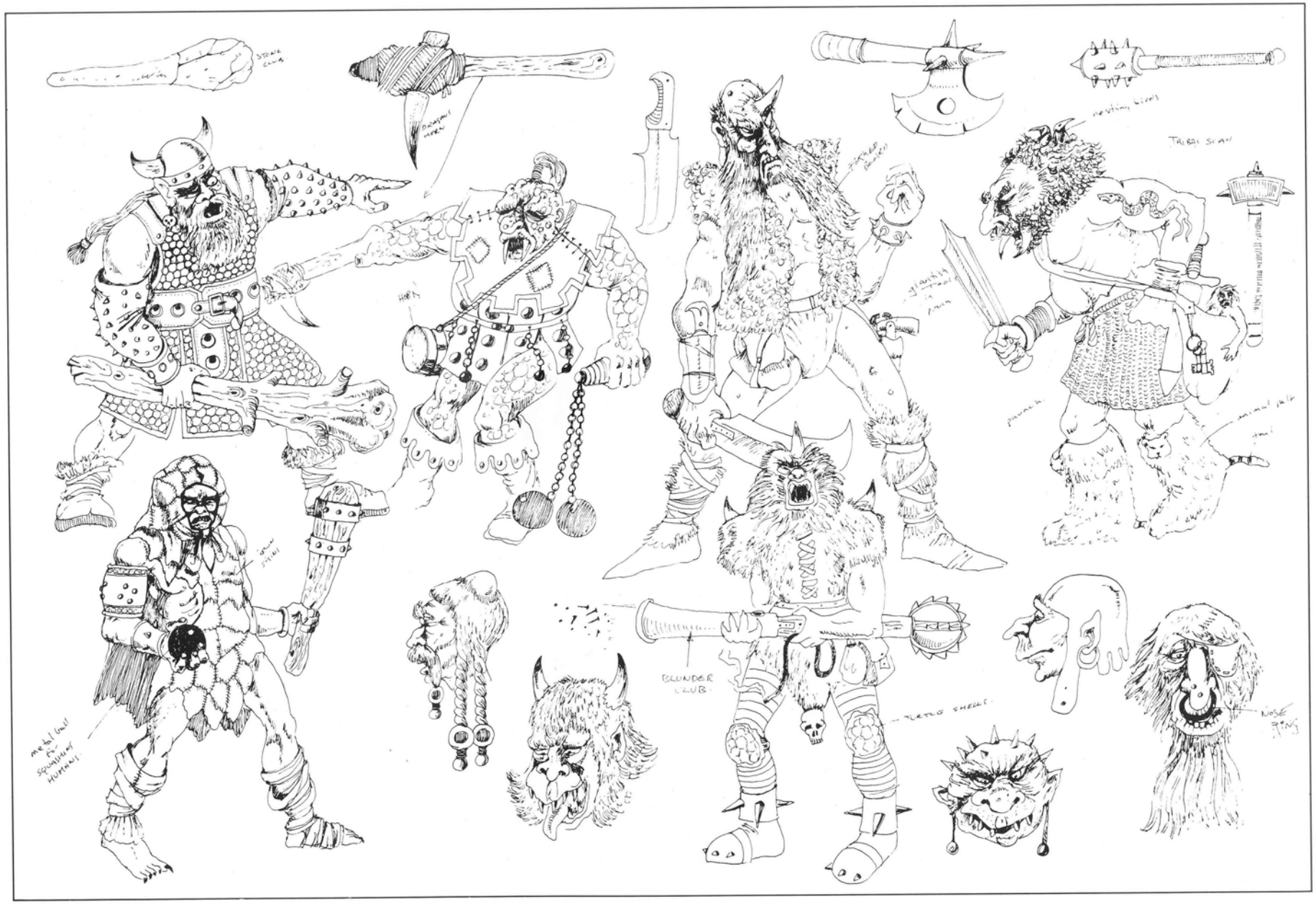
Beastmen *John Blanche*


THE EMPORER IN GOLD WAR ARMOUR
SHIELD TASSEL DESIGN BASED ON POND WEED
SHIELD SHAPES ECHO POND LILY
N.B. HUMAN SLAVES SHAVED HEAD LABOTOMY SCARS EACH SIDE OF TEMPLE NO HEAVY ARMOUR:- HIDE + SKIN ONLY + LABOTOMY PLATES MORE ORNATE CLOTHES FOR SLAVES OF UPPER CLASS WARRIORS) COLOURS, ALL NECKS. SQUARE SHIELDS ONLY/SLAVE STATUS
SKATER GUARD ELITE SCALE REST ALLIGATOR SKIN
ANCIENT WARRIOR TOOTHLESS SACK CROCKED THROAT TREATED WHIP MASTER TO FAT SLAVES

Demon Frogmen & Human Slave Warriors *John Blanche*

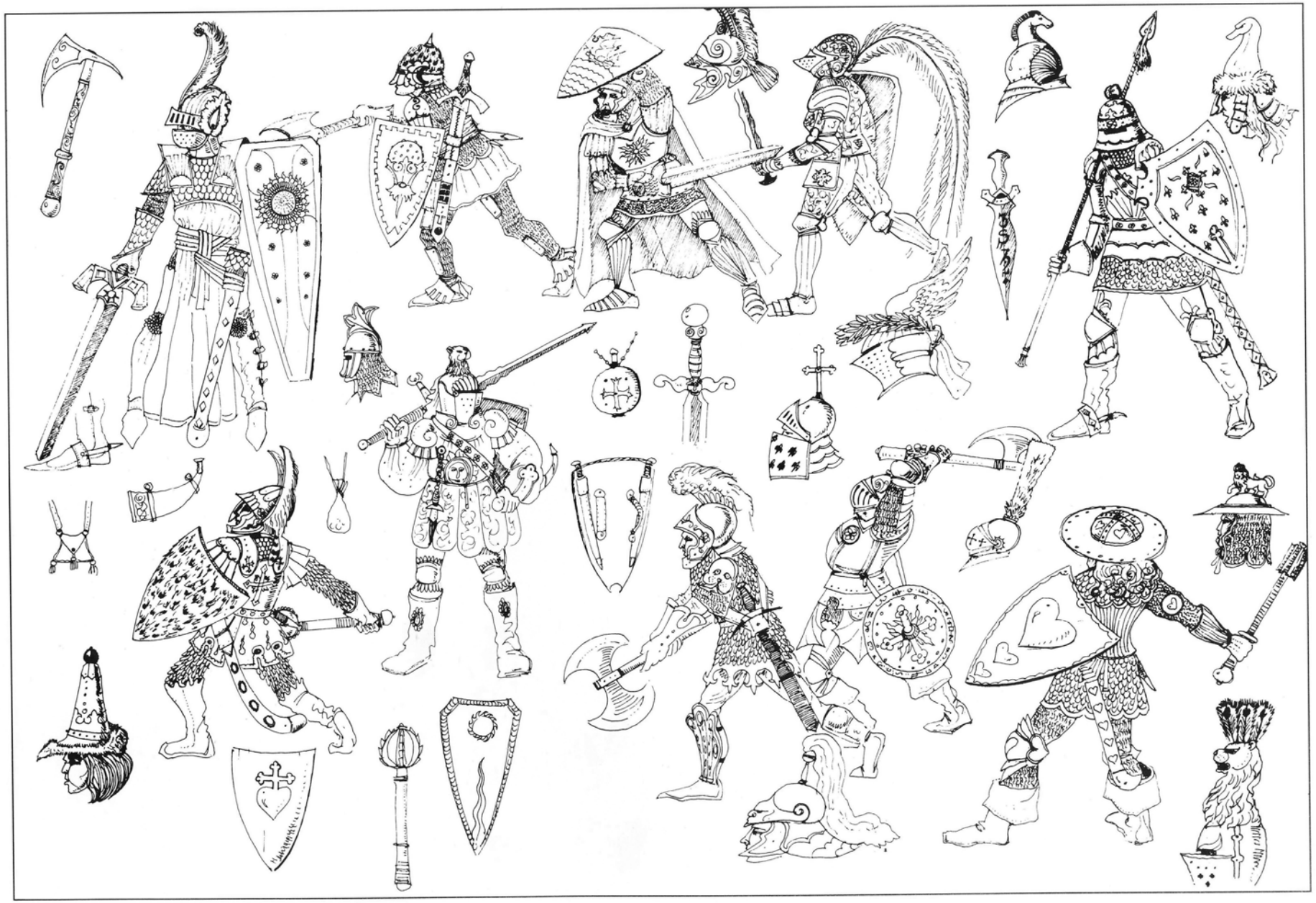
Armoured Orcs *John Blanche*

Runequest Dark Trolls *John Blanche*

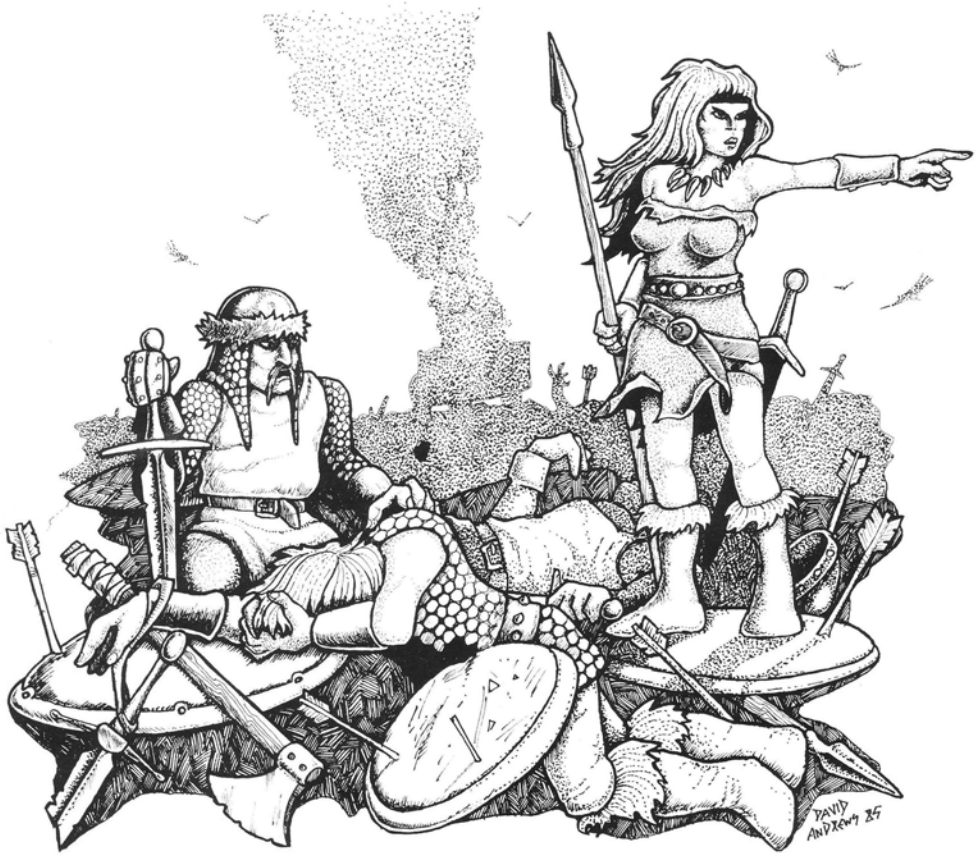


Giants *John Blanche*

Chaos Knights *John Blanche*



Goodly Knights *John Blanche*

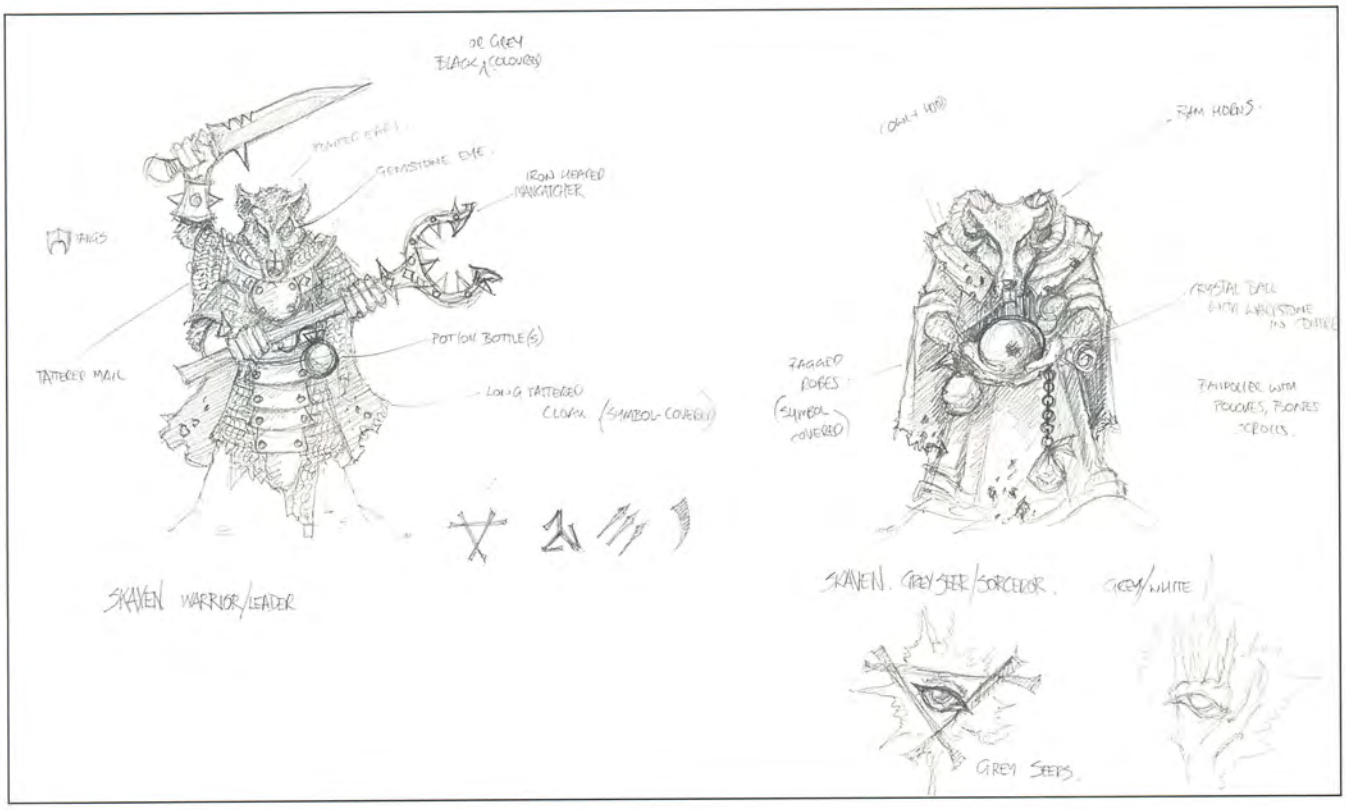


SINGLE FIGURES

Figures portray almost every type of creature possible, and even if the subject is fantasy they need to have their basis in reality. As many artists have noted, the roots of the supernatural and the fantastic are often to be seen in the real world. When Jeremy Goodwin sculpted his Chaos Ratmen, the Skaven, he began with a book on the anatomy and habits of rats. A whole background was invented for the Skaven, disgusting creatures at their very best, which led to more and more ideas coming about over what could be included as detail on the monsters. The anatomical drawings were 'converted' into concepts and the detail of clothing, shields and weapons added. Sketches of concepts do have quite a lot of freedom once in this domain. If, instead, they were preparing drawings for a new range of fighters, they would have to adhere to somewhat stricter rules, more in line with the mediaeval nature of their subjects.

In any design studio one can find shelf upon shelf of reference books. The same is true of a figure production area. Books abound on anatomy, mediaeval shield and armour design, helms, horse and Renaissance decorated weapons. Skeleton models can be taken directly from anatomical textbooks and then armed with dented and rusted armour, which in its turn can be lifted from a work on the knights of the Dark Ages.

The placement of muscles and features on human models is very important. On fictional beasts such as, for example, Wyvers, detail may be invented and is not



Opposite: *Battle scene, Dave Andrews.*

Above: *Sketch design, Skaven Chaos Ratmen, Jes Goodwin.*

Skaven Ratmen.

held to hard and fast rules. We all, however, recognise human features instantly and the smallest mistake will strike the viewer as 'wrong' though he is not at all sure why. Attention is therefore paid by every sculptor to the musculature of his subject. Tom Meier in fact sculpted and cast ready made bodies with all features and muscles intact onto which he could mould detail such as clothes and weapons. Knowing what was under this surface helped him to create more realistic impressions of hanging cloth and heavy weapons. Tom's models really are to a twenty-five millimeter scale. Most models these days are at least thirty millimetres in height, having grown somewhat over the years. Even the Dwarves, not renowned for their height, now attain twenty-five millimeters. Everything has been exaggerated, though as has been said a real human shrunk

Above and left: *Skaven Chaos Ratmen irregulars with standard bearer.*

to miniature size would look most skinny and 'unrealistic'.

This exaggeration has gone on and on – sometimes too far. The tastes of the public at large, who in the end dictate what is produced, seem to be veering towards models with more and more fine detail. Outrageous spikes, helmets and weapons are alright, as long as every point can be clearly seen and no confusion exists over what is represented. This of course makes things somewhat easier for the painter, who will no longer paint a pair of bare legs green, mistaking them for trousers. This is no joke, and has happened to enthusiasts on several occasions.

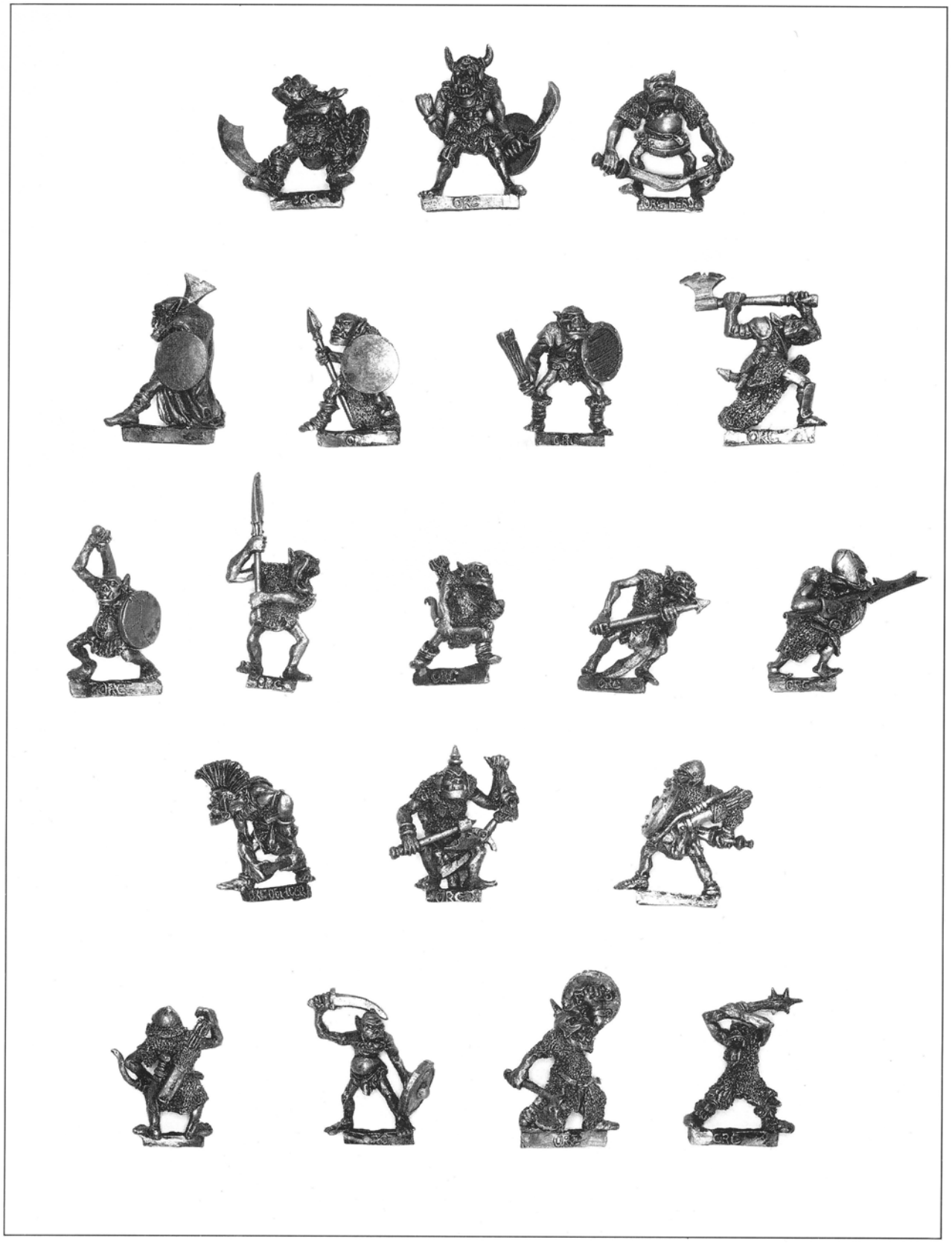
As time goes by the quality of sculpture

Above and right: *Skaven Chaos Ratmen Warpflamethrower crew and irregulars.*

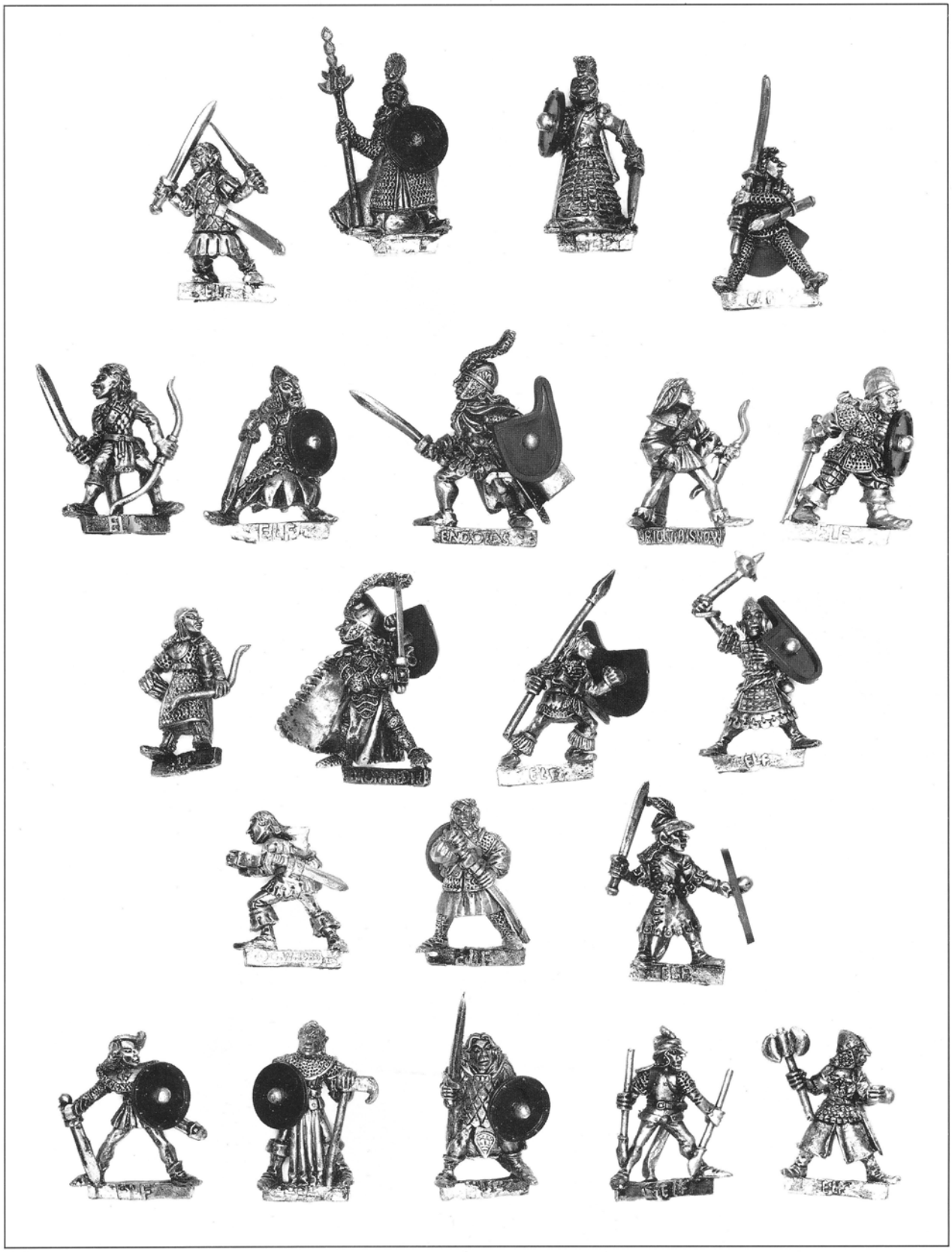
will improve as the artists devote more time to their profession. Hopefully this will not put prospective sculptors off from trying their hand at this fascinating pastime. Companies are always in need of new blood and any sign of talent is encouraged.

It is worth trying one's hand, if only at conversion work, since through this one can start to improve and learn the necessary techniques for modelling a whole figure.

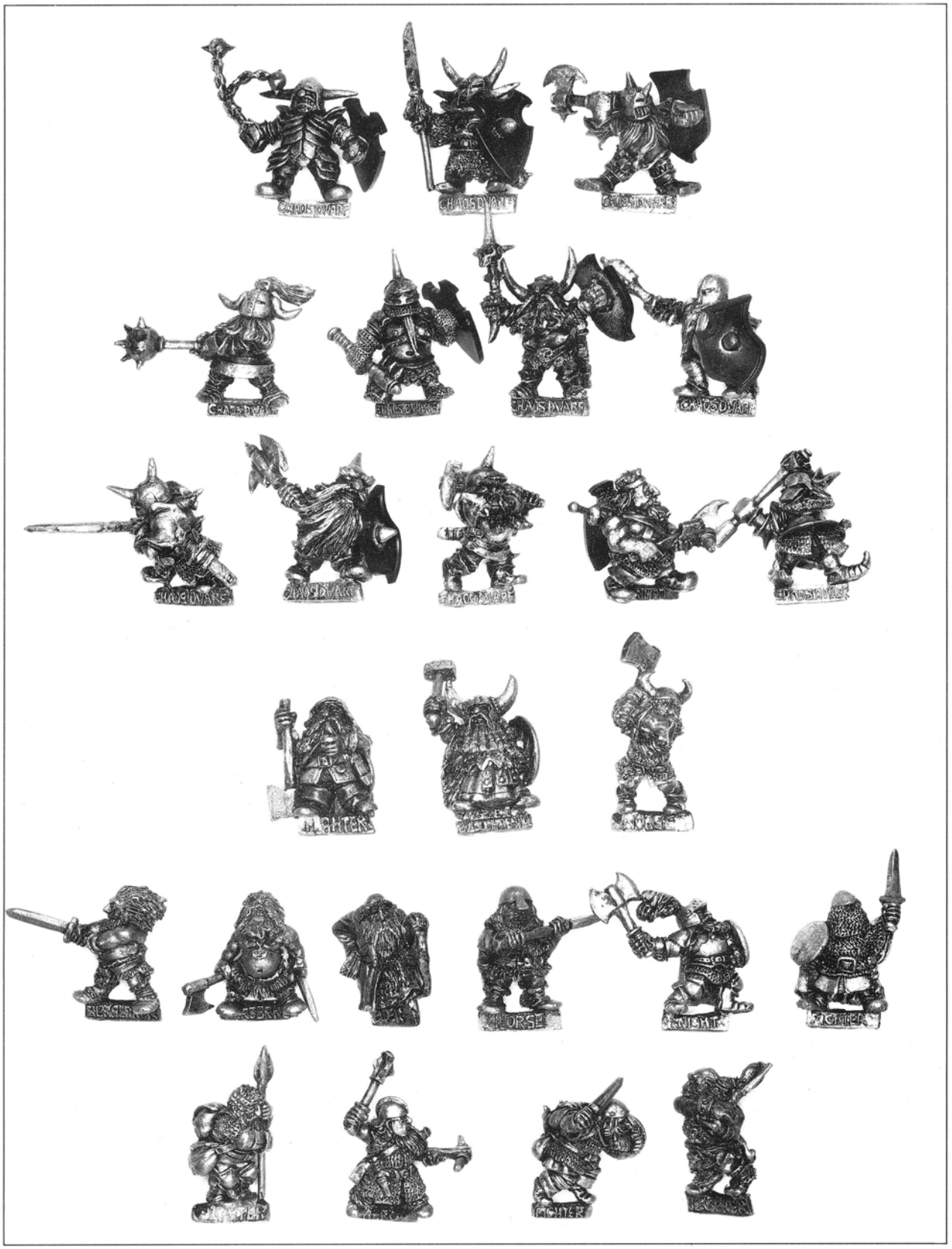
One can also make figures for oneself freed from the constraints imposed on a master destined for a mould. These miniatures are also by their very nature unique, and an art form in their own right.



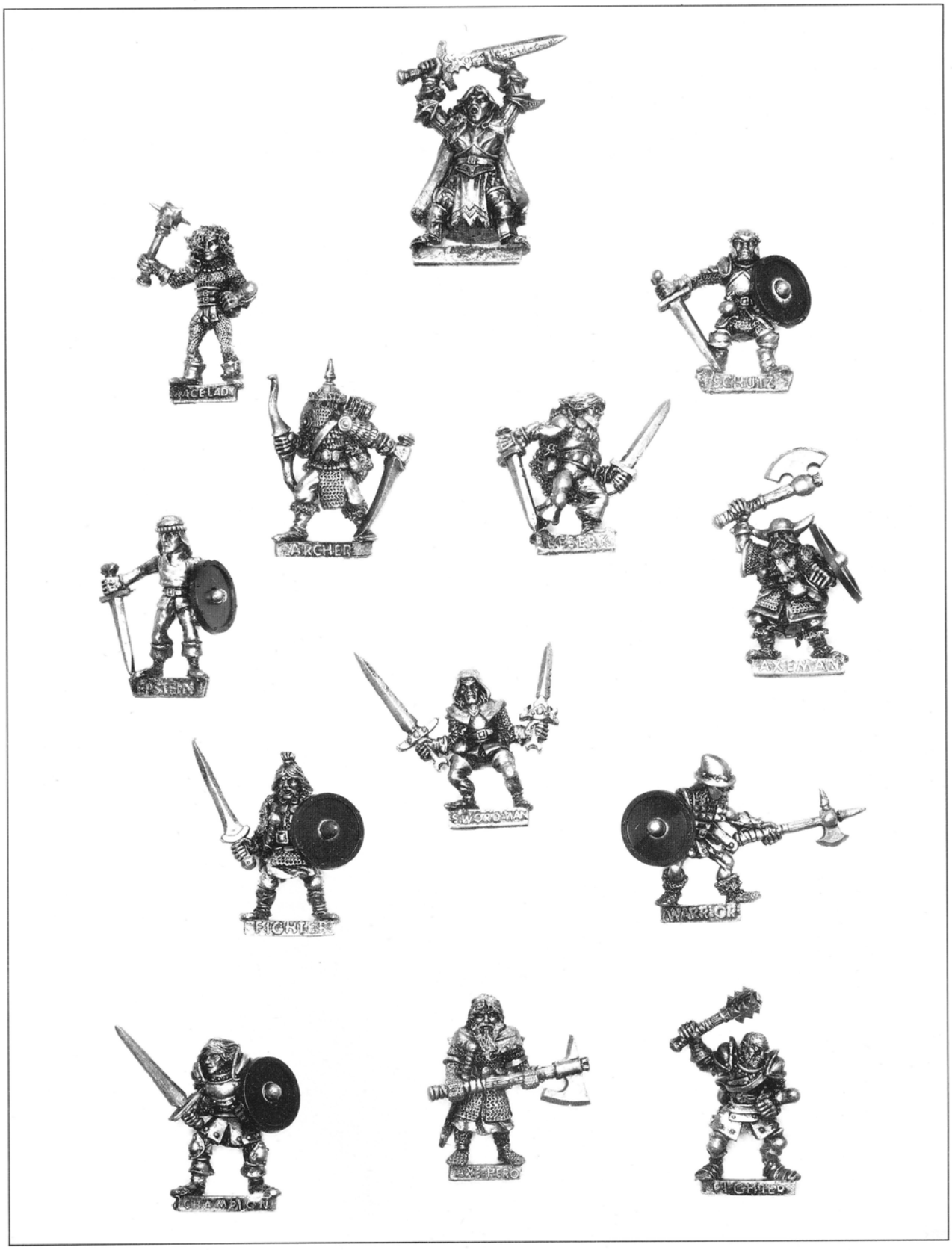
ORCS *The Perry Twins*



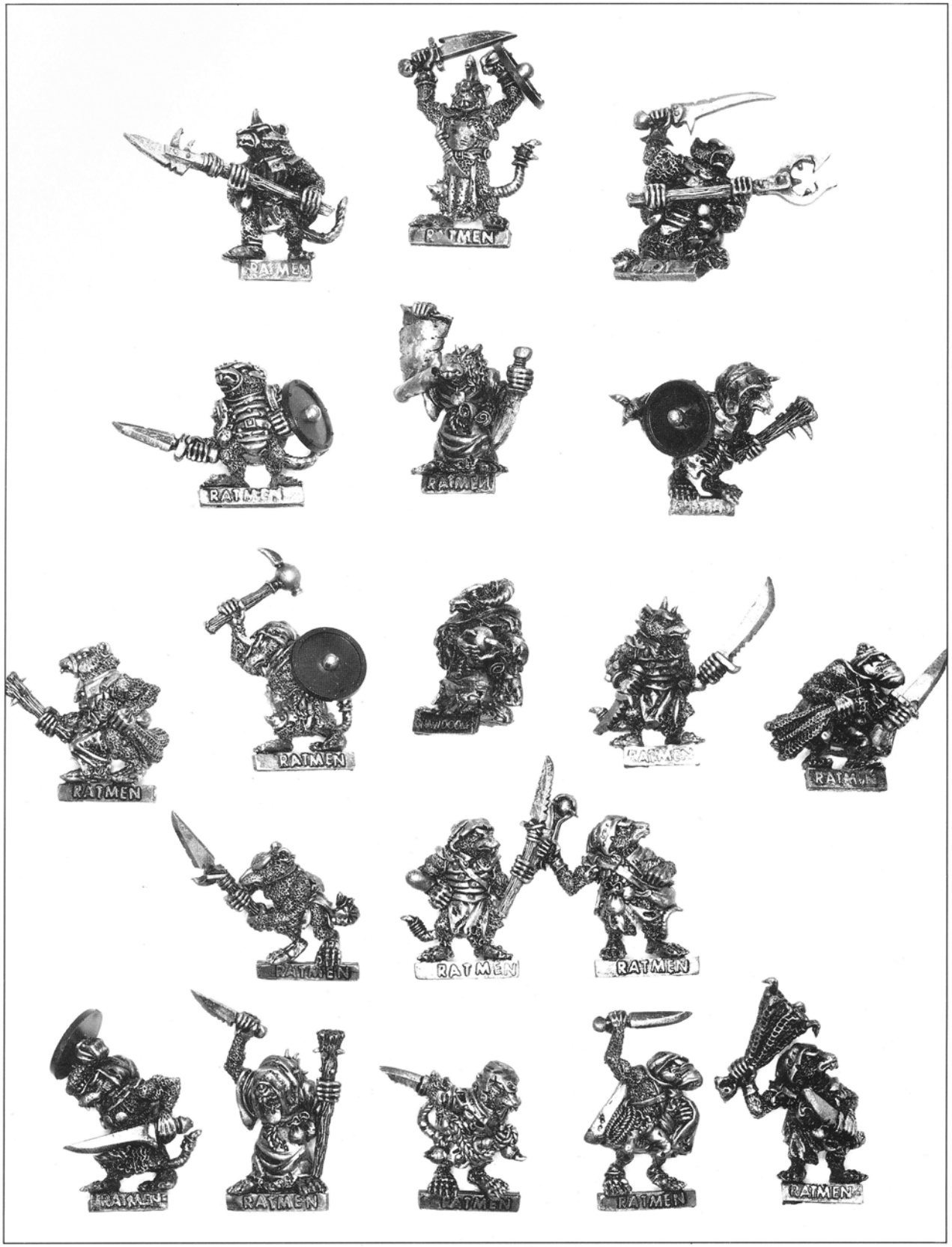
ELVES *Aly Morrisson*



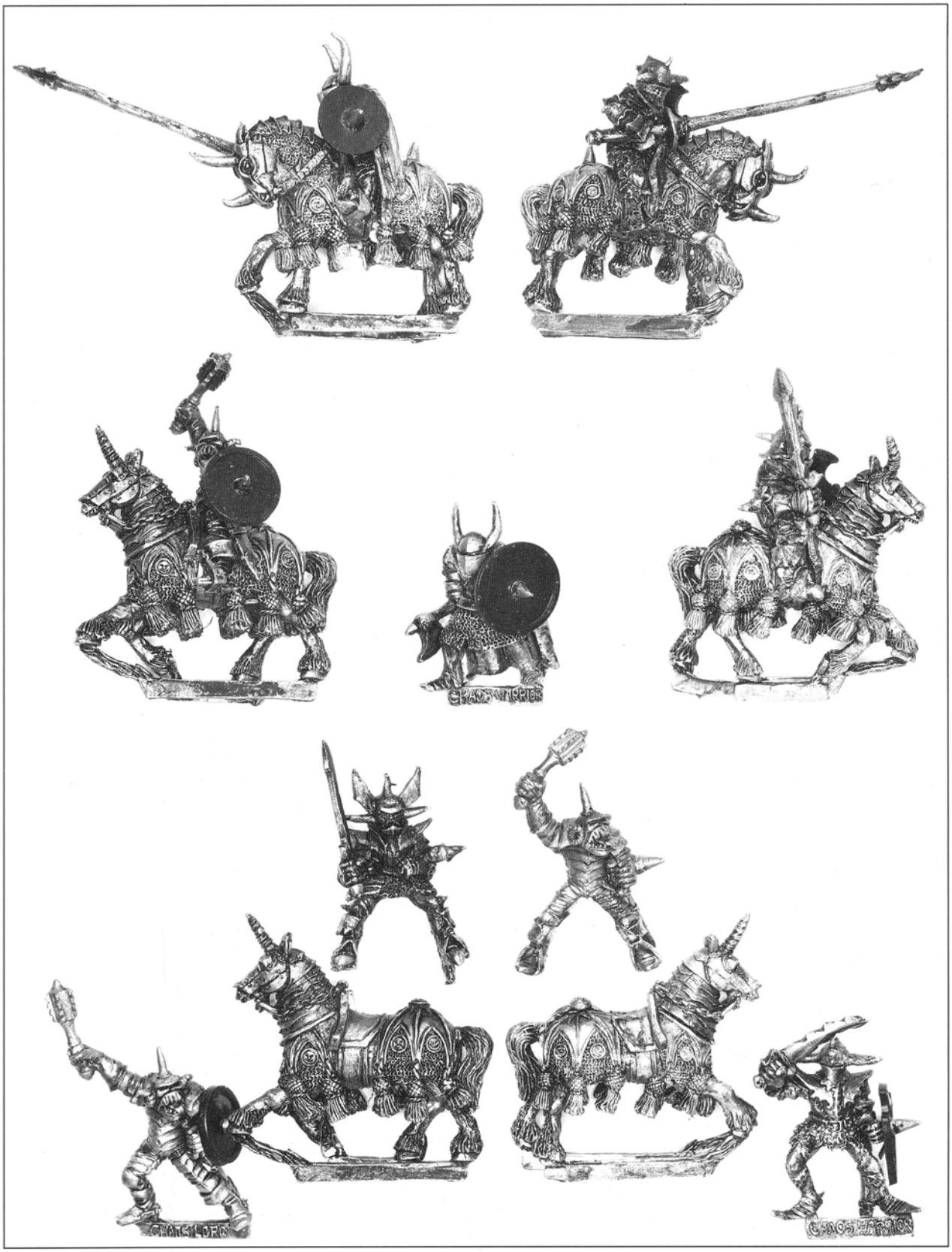
CHAOS DWARVES & DWARVES *The Perry Twins*



FIGHTERS *Jes Goodwin*

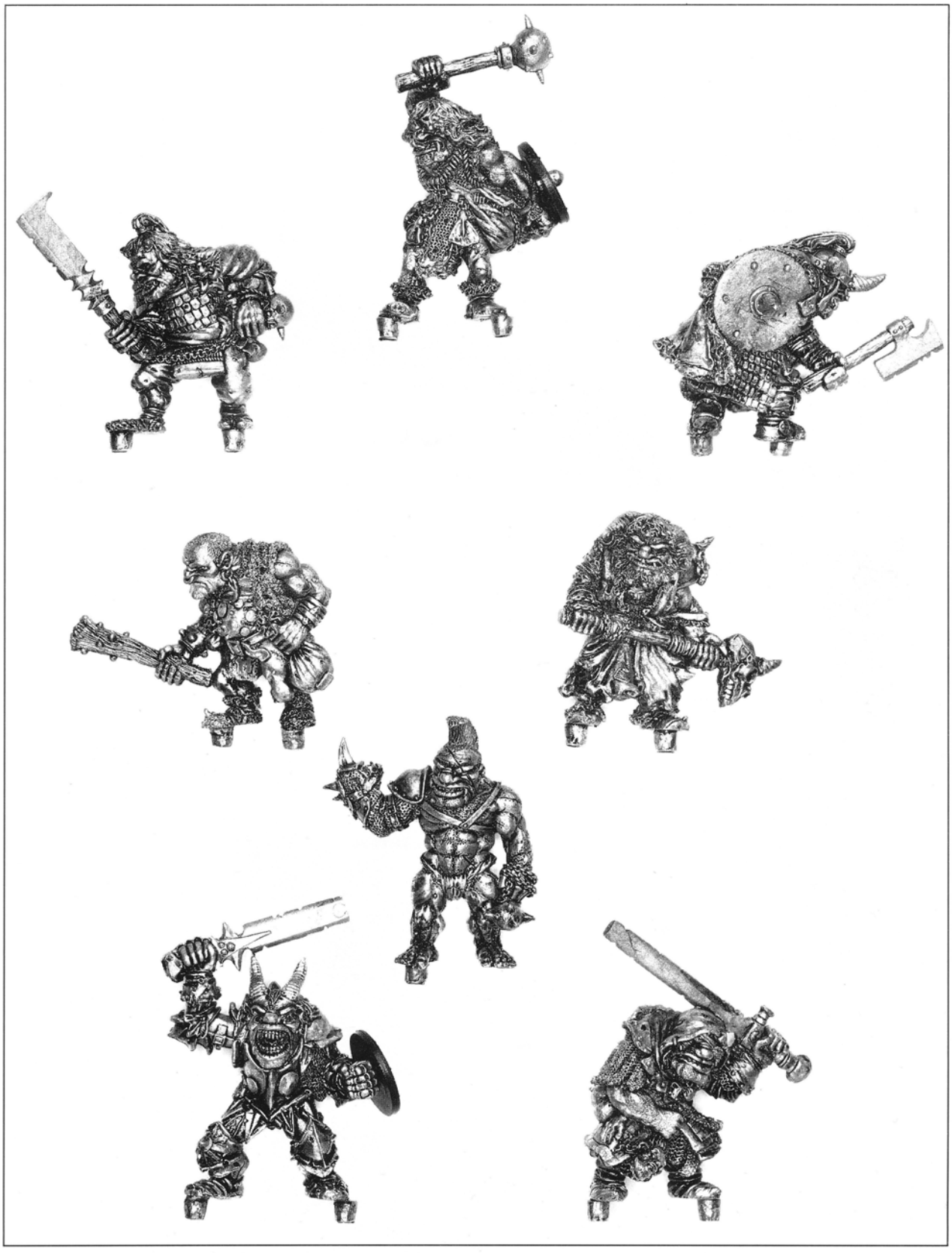


SKAVEN CHAOS RATMEN *Jes Goodwin*

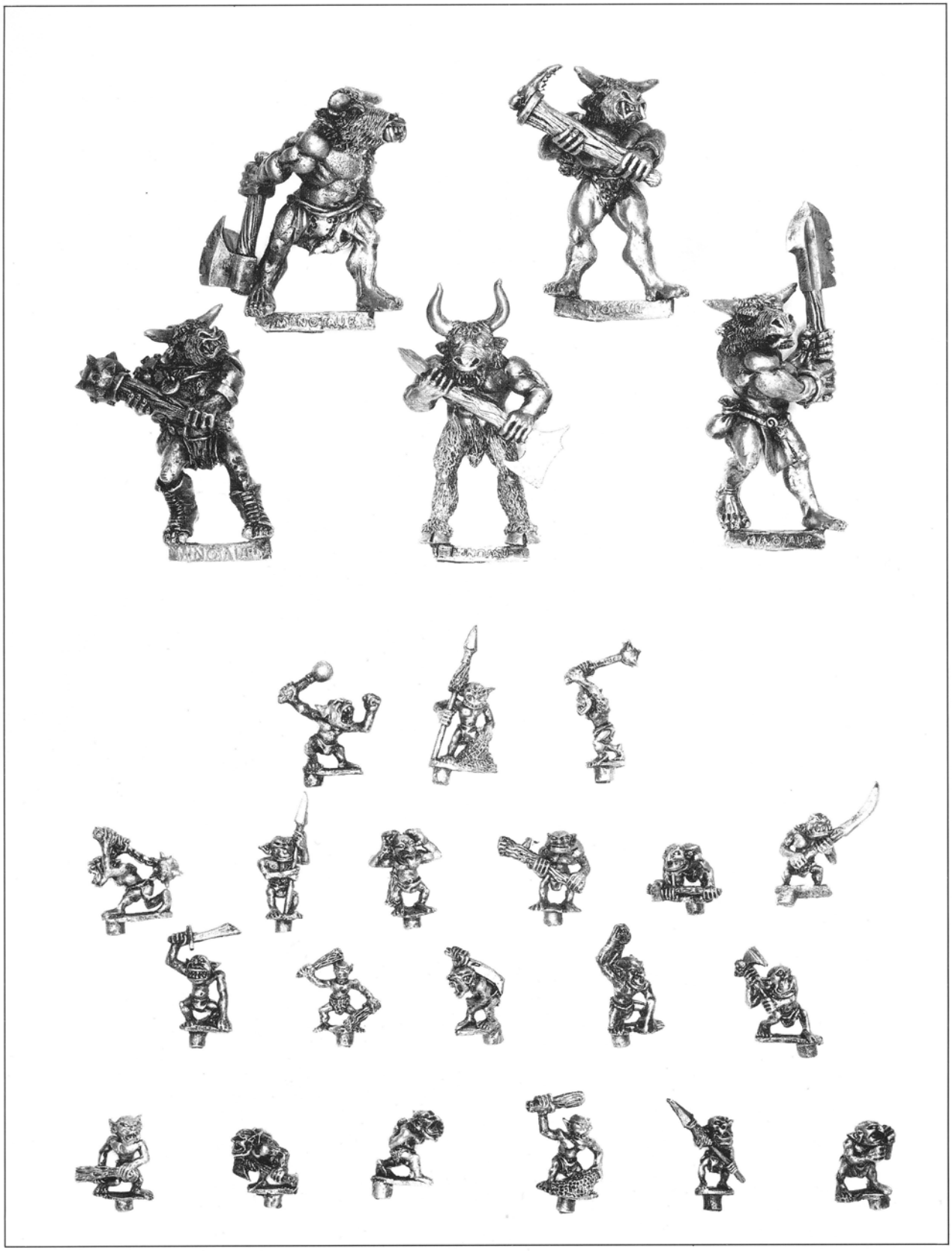


CHAOS KNIGHTS & WARRIORS *Aly Morrisson, Bob Naismith & The Perry Twins*

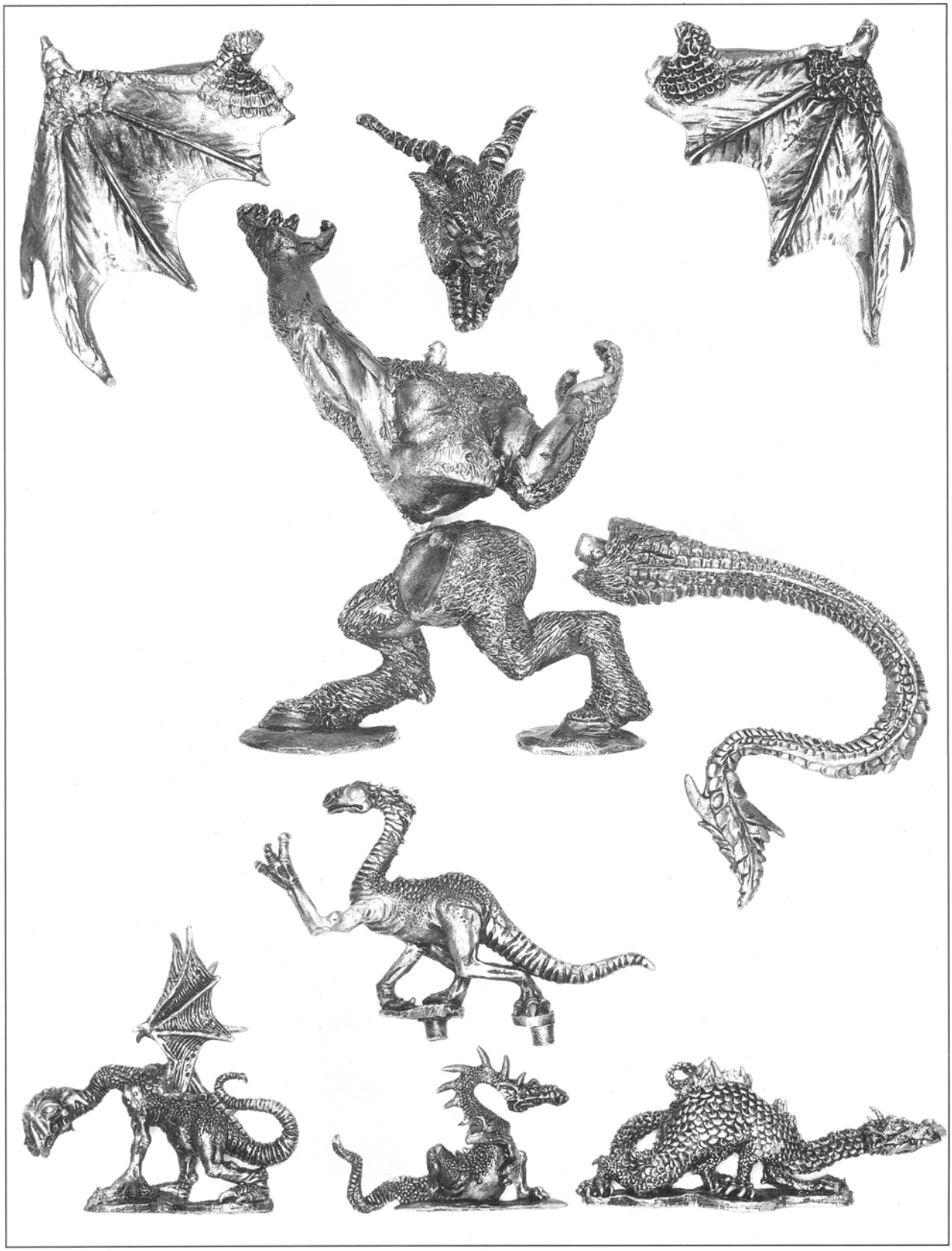
WIZARDS *Aly Morrisson*



GIANT OGRES *Jes Goodwin*

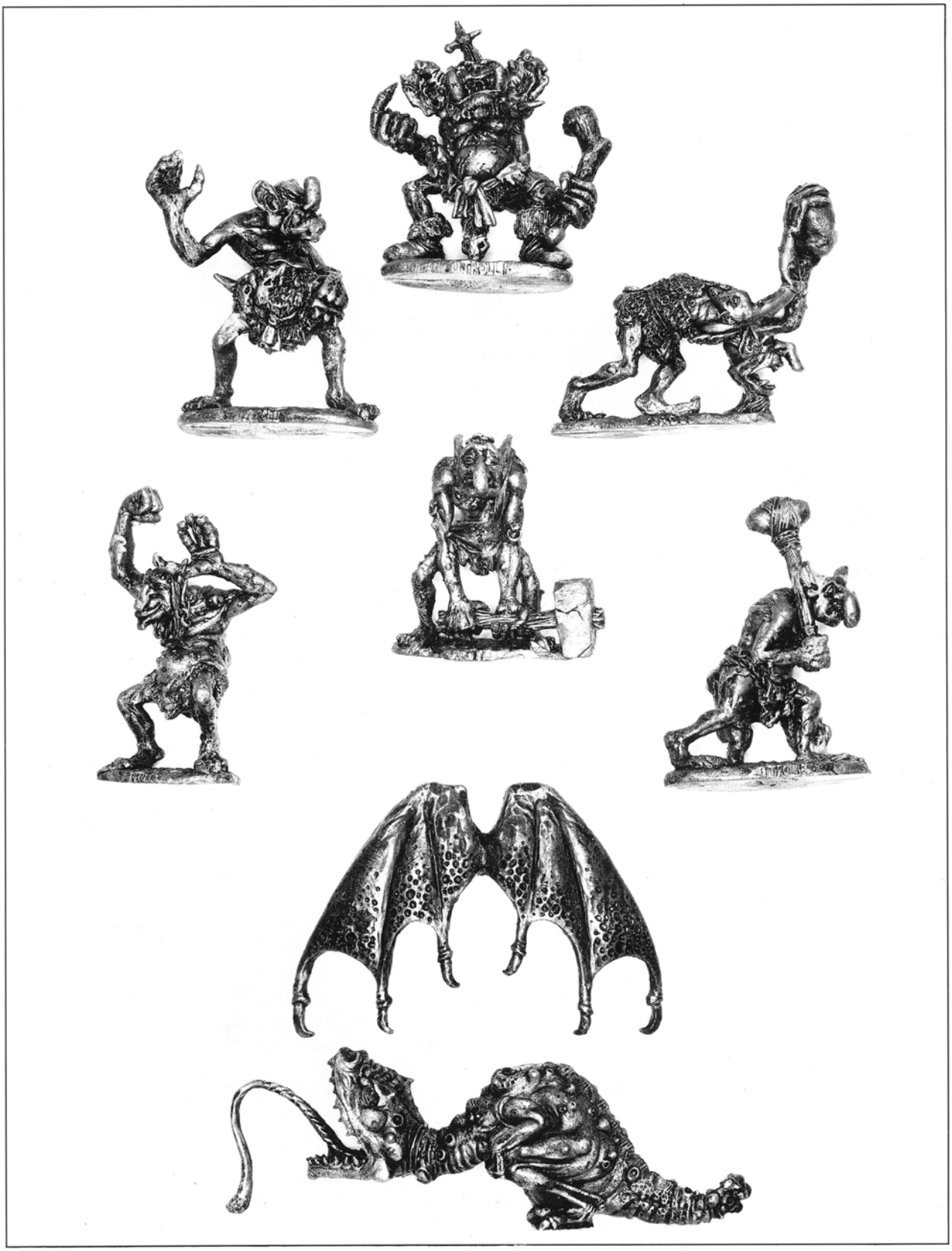


MINOTAURS & SNOTLINGS *Bob Naismith & Kevin Adams*

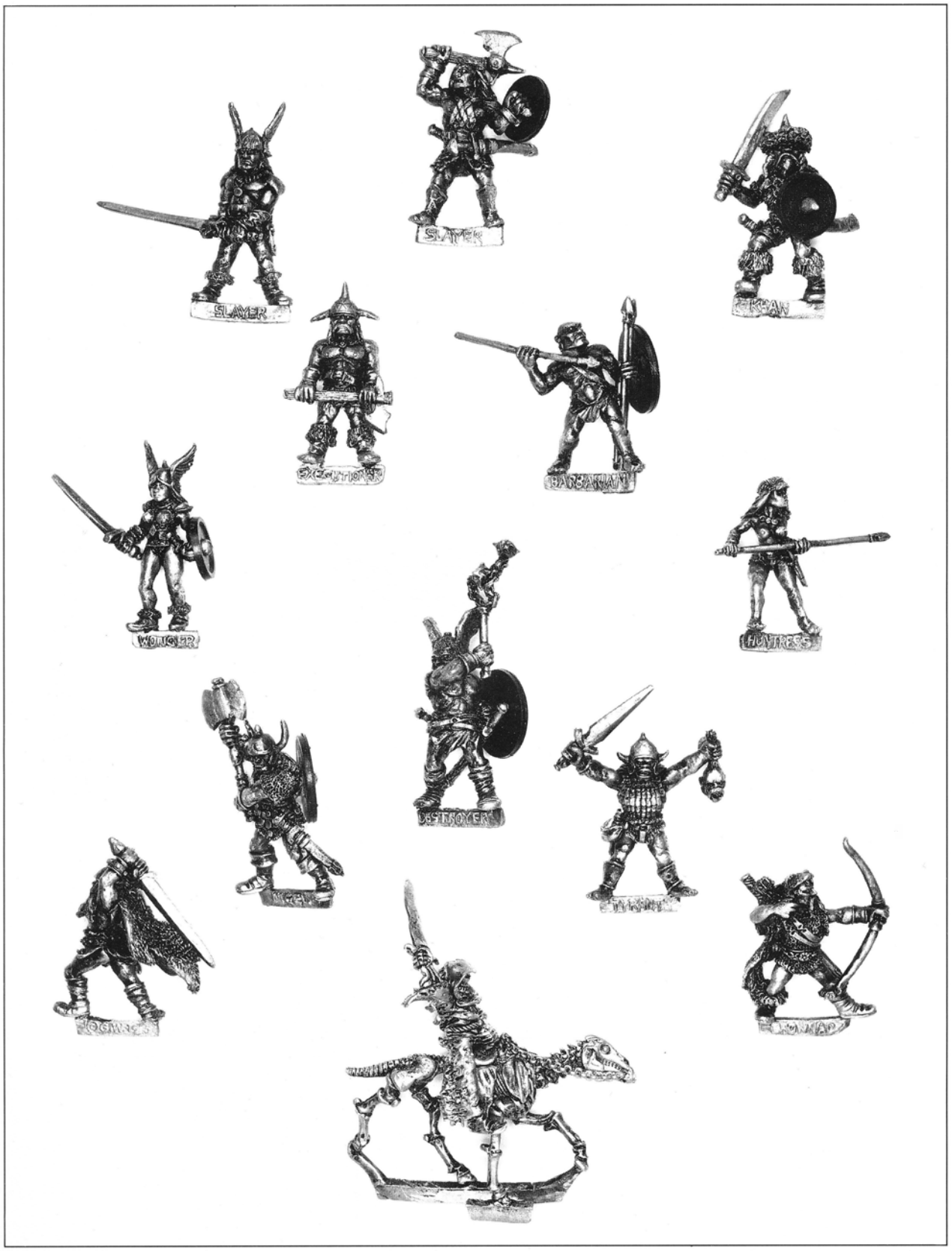


GIANT BALROG & SMALL DRAGONS *Tony Ackland & Nick Bibby*

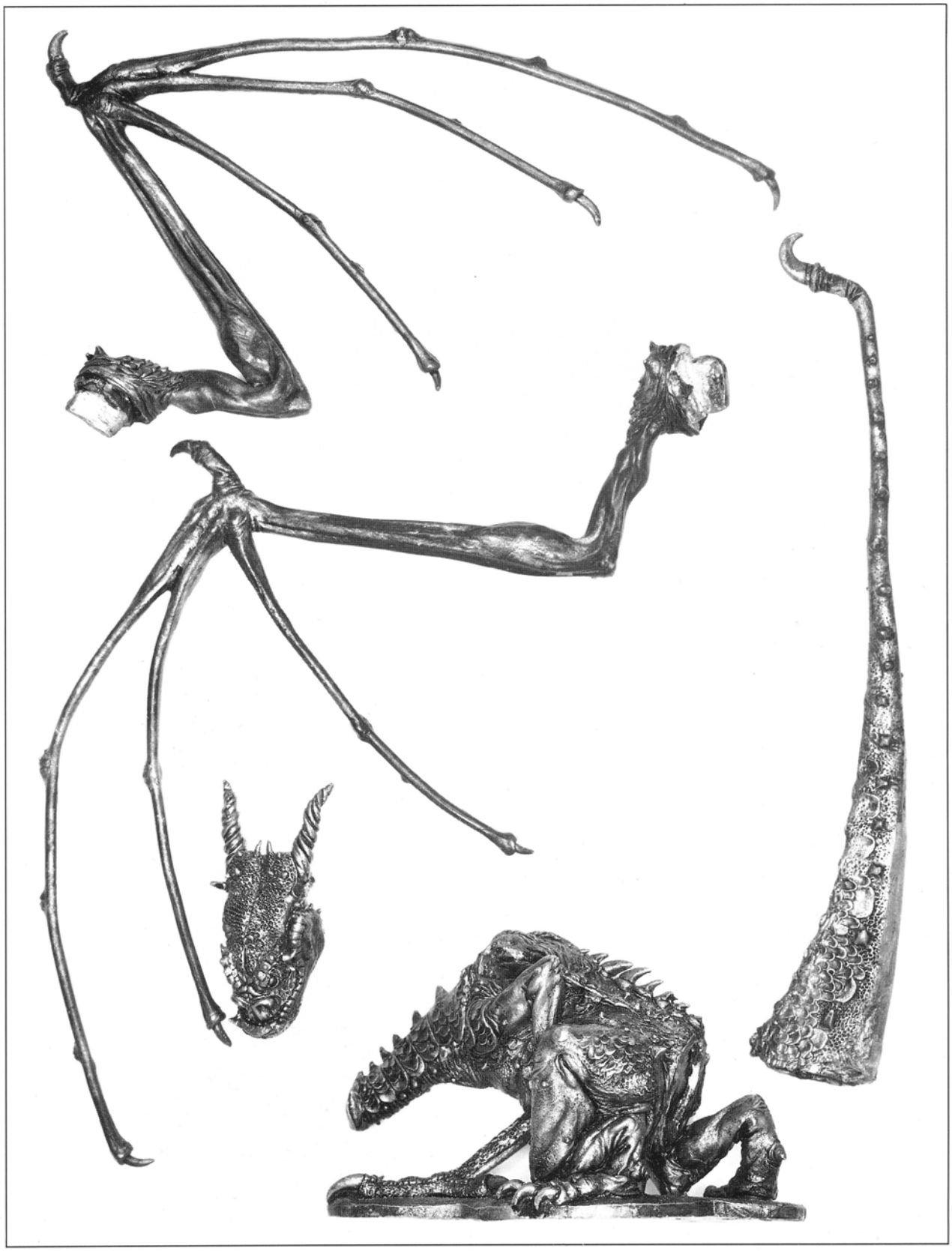
CHAOS BEASTMEN *Kevin Adams*



TROLLS & TOAD DRAGON *The Perry Twins & Nick Bibby*



BARBARIANS & UNDEAD HORSEMAN *The Perry Twins & Bob Naismith*



GREAT SPINED DRAGON *Nick Bibby*

Paint Set 1, John Blanche.

PAINTING THE FIGURE

Once the figure has gone through the various necessary stages it is produced. Now preparation for painting can start. As the saying goes, the best place to begin is at the beginning – with the right equipment. Although one can paint with the bare minimum of a brush, a few pots of paint and unbounded enthusiasm, the best results are achieved by taking time to consider in detail exactly what one is trying to produce.

One of the most important tools of the artist is of course his brush. There are a bewildering variety of these and they are available almost anywhere, though often the most expensive is that with a red sable tip. It is worth spending the extra required as the expense will be repaid many fold by the longer life of the quality brush. This relies on the artist looking after it – some painters go through brushes as if there were no tomorrow, having still not learned patience with their tools.

A good brush, no matter what its size, will have a nice sharp tip when wetted and moulded to shape. The best sizes to obtain when starting are a size 2 for large areas of colour and a size 0 for detail work. Don't buy a size 0000 unless you are particularly keen to draw in dots of light on the pupils of eyes – this is about the only use for which they are any good.

Next, the paint. Again there is a huge variety from which to choose. Each has its own interesting properties and uses which will be explored in more detail later. The best types with which to begin are the acrylics.

Above: *Colin Dixon painting legions.*

Top left: *Painting a boxed diorama, a cut-away dungeon.*

Bottom left: *Dave Andrews creating shield designs.*

Top right: *Halflings and a Dwarf Wizard.*

They do not smell foul, are water-based, waterproof and easy on brushes. A good starting selection will include a black and a white, then green, red, blue, yellow, brown and perhaps a silver. Other possible painting mediums include enamels, gouache, oils and ink but though each are interesting they do have their drawbacks.

Next on the list come the various implements with which the figure is prepared. A sharp craft knife and a small rat tail file are essential, as is a hard surface on which to work. Last, but by no means least, a bright light is required. A dim room not only causes eye strain but also frustration as, after each long session, the harsh light of day picks out all those unpainted areas that only minutes before appeared to be delicate shading.

Set all the tools out within easy reach. Provide two pots of water for cleaning purposes, as well as some kitchen tissue and a soft cloth. The figure now awaits painting. However, before this can begin it needs to be prepared. Miniatures often suffer from 'flash'. These are small bits of metal on the model that should not be there. They appear because of the air ducting grooves in the mould, which are thin lines that ensure no air bubbles form as the molten metal is poured. Because the resulting protrusions are so small they can easily be removed and smoothed off with a file.

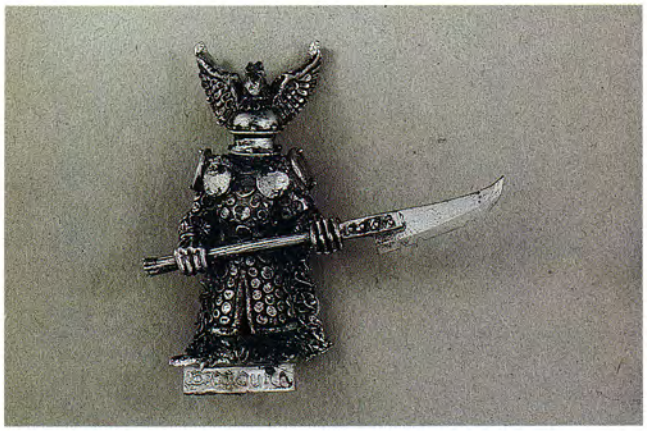
A second, sometimes more difficult problem to deal with is that of mould lines. These appear because the two halves of the mould do not fit together perfectly and this

Above and right: *Zombie horde and Skeleton horseman.*

produces a thin line around the miniature. These lines become more pronounced the older the mould becomes, with the result that older castings are quite inferior to the earlier ones. The problem can be solved by judicious carving followed by careful rubbing down with wet and dry paper until the surface is completely smooth.

With the figure now cleaned it can be undercoated in some neutral colour, grey or beige being the most useful. This process gives the paint a surface to which to adhere and makes detail far easier to see. Once this undercoat has fully dried painting may begin.

It is always best to know which colours will be going where before the session begins. It is at this point that a knowledge of colour is useful. It is a well-known artistic technique to use harmonious hues in any painting and



1 The basic 'bare metal' figure. The miniature is a fighter named 'Lord Aquila', sculpted by Jeremy Goodwin.

2 The undercoat is applied. Note that the blade of the weapon is not painted, as the metal itself will be used for a 'metal-look' effect at the end of the painting session. The undercoat acts both as a base for the paint and to highlight detail.

3 The major colours are added; black for the surcoat, dark brown for the boots and dark grey for the cloak. Since all of these have a black base they run together well and do not clash.

there is no reason why this should not be transferred to figure art. A quick reference method which is of some use is the 'colour wheel'. In its most unsophisticated form, it takes the semblance of a circle split into six sections, each containing a colour: red, orange, yellow, green, light blue, dark blue and back to red. Every hue will blend with its neighbour and complement its opposite. The colours marked on this particular example are those of the visible spectrum. Of course far more complicated wheels can be, and have been invented.

Since colours are provided 'ready mixed' it is an unfortunate fact that a lot of painters exhibit that most human of traits in taking

4 *Further colours are added. Dark silver is dry-brushed over the metal plates on the surcoat and its border is painted red, the chin just visible under the helmet is completed in flesh tones, and the wood of the pole-arm is painted deep brown.*

5 *Nearly all the uncoloured areas have now been filled. The helmet and shoulder plates are finished using a gold base and shaded up with white to give a slightly tarnished feel.*

6 *The finished figure. The Griffon crest is dry-brushed with successive shades of brown lightened with yellow and white. The metal of the weapon is painted matt black, and then the blade itself is scraped clean using a scalpel, leaving a bright, sharp edge. The cloak is dry-brushed with lighter and lighter shades of grey to take it quickly from dark to light. Finally, such details as the Griffon's eyes and beak are added, and a check is made that no undercoat remains visible.*

the easy way out and only using those colours that stand before them rather than mixing pigments. This practice can have two effects – new shades being discovered of course, but also the fact that some paints can react together to produce mediums with new textures and properties. Top artists are always on the lookout for these new effects – they are always useful to bring out detail on figures.

Once it has been decided which colour is to go where, painting can begin. The key to all miniature art is to exaggerate. Assuming that the average man stands 1.80 m tall, then the 25 mm figure is 72 times smaller than the full-size human. Taking this as a straight trans-

Above and left: *Dwarves.*

lation, all shadows should be 72 times lighter than they are in real life. It is easier to think in these terms if one wants to improve quickly. The problem then is how to achieve this shading. As the accompanying illustrations demonstrate, it is necessary to make this effect as realistic as possible whilst still ensuring that it is pleasing to the eye.

The most common method used and one of the easiest is to paint the area concerned in the deepest shade of the required colour. Choose the hue needed and after stirring thoroughly, place a small amount of pigment onto a palette. This gives a more accurate impression of its true shade. Mix in a quantity of darkest paint to achieve a deeper

Above and right: *Dwarves.*

tone. Exactly which darkener to add depends upon the colour concerned, though the paint table included later should give some idea.

The main colour itself can now be added to raised areas on the model. It is important to remember that light generally strikes vertically. Although unusual effects can be created by not obeying this rule, it is best to learn in the normal fashion. One has to imagine which parts of the figure would receive the most light and accordingly cover this area with lighter paint. The darkest zones will be those which are least accessible, for instance, underneath folds in cloth, the recesses of cloaks and hoods, the underside of belts, the gaps between fingers and so on.

Chaos Dwarves.

Next add a lightener to the basic colour, and again apply the resulting mixture to the raised areas on the figure. Add more and more lightener and cover less and less area each time, until the colour is almost white with only a hint of the original shade. The result will be darkness in folds gradually rising to light on peaks. The number of coats thus applied can be as few as three: deep, normal and light, or as many as the painter desires to achieve an even transition between shades.

At this point it is appropriate to consider the properties of the various mediums used by artists and their advantages and disadvantages before discussing the effects that

Chaos Dwarves.

may be achieved with them. There are three material types to be looked at; oil based, water based and inks, and each will be examined in turn.

Everyone will be familiar with the characteristic shape of the standard oil-paint tube. It is of course widely available and all art shops generally carry a wide variety of useful colours. It is the texture of the paint that is both helpful and frustrating. Oil paints are far more vivid than other mediums. They are very good at producing vibrant flesh tones. They may also be mixed on the model itself as drying times are slow, which helps with that all-important blending process. The resulting surface is rough however, and this

Above and left: *Chaos Beastmen with standard bearer.*

can seem out of scale. The same slow drying time which is helpful whilst working the paint can also be a hindrance. Most models need to be handled during work and one has to be very careful not to touch any previously painted area. One way to avoid this problem is to mix oil and enamel paints together. Some care has to be taken in this; results are not always those hoped for. The texture is, however, smoother and drying time is reduced whilst the mixture still retains the vivid colours of the oils.

The tone of oils is particularly useful when painting animals which have smooth coats – the finish is perfect for conveying that half-glossy look. It is also very good for portraying the grainy appearance of used leather apparel. Brushes should always be thoroughly cleaned after work in this medium first using turpentine and then washing out the hairs with water.

Another oil-based paint that has already been mentioned is enamel. In previous years it was the most popular medium amongst figure painters, though it has been somewhat superceded recently by the improved

Above and right: *Chaos Beastmen.*

acrylics. It is most often found in tins as the medium and the pigment need to be held together in order to keep the paint liquid. It can be found with gloss, semi-gloss and matt finishes which again can provide new ideas, and is especially good for use for finishes of inanimate objects as it has a dull look and so usually needs only one application, though of course this does rule out many possible uses. It does however dry quickly to a tough resistant finish.

The final real oil based paint is a relative newcomer to the market, the Alkyd. It has all the richness of oils with quicker drying properties. It can still be some time before it is fully dry but does not provide the same frustrating problems as oils. It is however quite a new product and so can be difficult to track down and expensive when found.

Water based paints are finding more and more favour these days due to their various advantages, not the least of which is cost. The most useful are the new generation of acrylics. They are available in both jars and tubes in a wide variety of rich colours. They have some bad points in that they flow less

Above and left: *Chaos Warriors.*

easily than other paints and they do dry very, almost too, quickly. They are also less resistant to handling and if intended for this purpose should be protected by a layer of varnish. They are however easy to use and very kind to brushes. One can even maltreat a brush by leaving paint to dry on its tip, and come back later and wash it off and still not have too many problems.

Another useful water based colourant is gouache. It is however somewhat temperamental when used on figures, though interesting results can be obtained through use.

Inks require different techniques from other painting mediums but are rewarding if used properly. They are easily thinned, dry quickly and can produce many easy but effective results.

The various uses of these assorted materials are discussed in the next chapter. A paint table on page 86 covers those colours that are best used for toning and shading.

The technique of building up colour to lighter and lighter shades is one best learnt by practice. Gradually one learns which

Above and right: *Chaos Warriors.*

figures would best benefit from the techniques: magicians are especially apt as they are often modelled with long flowing cloaks. Barbarians in chainmail do not come out quite so well. For painting armour, in fact, one of the best methods is drybrushing. If, for instance, chain mail is to be painted, then the whole surface should be covered in black or very deep silver. A brush is then taken and run lightly through a pool of silver paint. Most of the paint is wiped off: what is left is only a thin layer and almost dry. The chain mail surface is painted – what happens is that the pigment will only colour raised surfaces. It is a quick and easy method that is not hard to learn and can be very effective.

Other ways of painting metal armour depend on whether one wants a shiny or a rusty finish. If one is painting a goodly knight on trusty charger, then the armour is painted in bright silver, with a thin wash of black passed over the top. The black runs into recesses and takes the over-bright 'shine' off the rest of the paint. If a rusty, tarnished finish is required, then the figure should not be undercoated, and the armour

Above and left: *Orcs, Wizards, Goblins and Beastmen.*

should be painted first. Brown ink should be washed over the bare metal. A dark shade is best and several coats may be required. As ink is thin, and has no light undercoat off which to reflect, the colour is deepest in recesses and lightest on surfaces. There is no shine and the metal looks worn and dull.

These techniques can also be used on sword blades and the like. Metal is always difficult to portray realistically and the answer is sometimes to let the model do the work for you. If, for instance, a bright blade is needed on a samurai's katana, then do not undercoat the relevant metal and leave it until the painting has been completed on the model itself. Swords are nearly always cast

Above and right: *Beastmen, Knights, Adventurers and Chaos Warriors.*

too thick – thinner and they would break far too easily whilst being handled. However for accuracy one can pare down the blade with a craft knife then sand the metal with wet and dry paper. A thin wash of black is applied that runs into the grooves left by the paper and the black is dulled. The craft knife is run down the sides of the cutting edge of the sword and a bright strip is left which can be very realistic.

For painting leather one can use acrylics and the final coat watered down so that the surface has a semi-gloss finish. Oil paint can also be used to give a roughened surface, though as said before the drying time is a problem.

Above and left: *Goblins and Hobgoblins.*

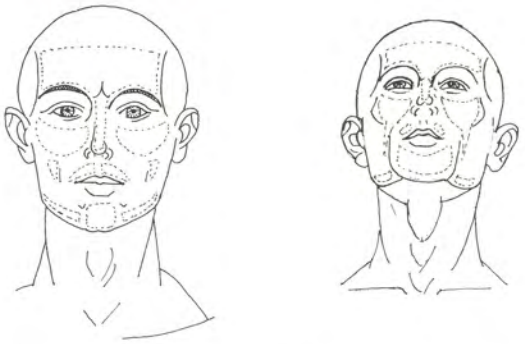
Colour	Deep Shade	Dark Mixer	Normal Shade	Light Mixer	Highlight
Black	Black	Black	Blue/Black	Blue	Dark Grey/Blue
White	Grey	Black	Lt Grey	Black	White
	Lt Blue	Blue	White/Blue	Blue	White
Grey	Dk Grey	Black	Lt Grey	White	White/Grey
Dk Blue	Dk Blue	Black	Blue	White	Lt Blue
Lt Blue	Blue	Black	Lt Blue	White	Blue/White
Dk Green	Deep Blue/Gr	Blue	Green	White	Lt Green
Lt Green	Dk Green	Blue	Green	Yellow	Yellow/Green
Purple	Dk Blue/Purple	Blue	Red/Purple	Red/White	Purple
Dk Brown	Black	Black	Dk Brown	White	Brown
Lt Brown	Dk Brown	Black	Brown	Yellow	Brown/Yellow
Red	Brown/Red	Brown	Red	Yellow	Red/Yellow
Scarlet	Dk Red/Purple	Red/Purple	Red	White	White/Red
Yellow	Orange	Orange	Lt Orange	White	Yellow
Orange	Orange/Red	Red	Orange	Yellow	Yellow/Orange

Above and right: *Armoured Orcs and Orc Boar riders.*

One particularly difficult aspect to master is that of painting flesh tones. Most commercially available flesh colours are too white or too orange. A good base from which to work is burnt sienna or dark reddish brown. Ochre, white and red make up the next stages, at least for caucasian types.

In painting flesh, one should remember that it reflects light when taut and can be very bright. If someone is gripping a weapon tightly this can be represented by painting the knuckles almost white, a combination of tautness and the loss of blood from the surface skin.

On the face, light hits the brow, nose, cheeks and chin the most. These areas should therefore be painted lightest of all. The nose especially is bright and since it divides the face care should be taken to achieve the right mix of colour. The accompanying illustrations show the colours to apply to faces. One can almost 'paint by numbers' if necessary.



Painting eyes is something learnt only by hard and frustrating practice. There are three

Above and left: *Trolls, Giant, Eternal Champions and an Axe Fighter.*

possible techniques – either leave the eye sockets dark – particularly effective on barbarians giving deep and meaningful stares, or paint in the eye. Method one involves painting the eye white and then with the steadiest hand possible, dotting the pupil. Eyes are best portrayed very dark by mixing black into the relevant colour. Sky-blue and light green tend to be lost in the whiteness of the eye. Method two means painting the eye the colour of the pupil and then adding two white dots, one either side of the pupil. Remember that the pupil is not a dot – it is a circle which nearly fills the eye. If done too small, then the figure will look surprised or merely strange. If one too large then he will look cross-eyed.

A good idea is to line the edge of the eye if possible. This gives more definition, and as the eyes are possibly the most important part of the face they are best shown up. Their importance cannot be overestimated – we always look at eyes when we see people, and we are experts on judging their expressions. Although it may be difficult conveying, for instance, excitement in miniature painting it is worth trying. Eyebrows help in definition as well and are best added in a dark colour. A

Above and right: *Dwarves, Zombies, Skeleton and a triumphant Dwarf stands atop a giant's head.*

thin line will do – it can easily be overdone.

The lips can give life to a face. Do not use scarlet unless you want to show the miniature wearing make-up. A darkened red is more effective, with the lower lip being lighter. Exaggeration is good overall but on small important points like the face it can ruin a good figure!

Hair is very difficult to represent. Dry-brushing is used but exaggeration is not always useful. Black hair is best, slightly lightened with blue until the effect can just be seen – this conveys the deep shade that black hair gives. Blonde hair is deepened with light brown and lightened with yellow and white. One can shade up to very light depending on the effect required. Browns can be lightened with yellow and white – red hair has an orange/brown base and is lightened with orange and yellow.

A final point – a dot of almost white on the tips of toe nails. Dark brown dots can show nostrils. Tiny dots, either with a brush or thin pen can be whiskers. Tattoos are best done with thin blue ink – especially if drawn on. Warpaint is painted on quite thickly in bold colours without any shading. Don't be worried to try anything different!

Monster Paints, Bob Naismith.

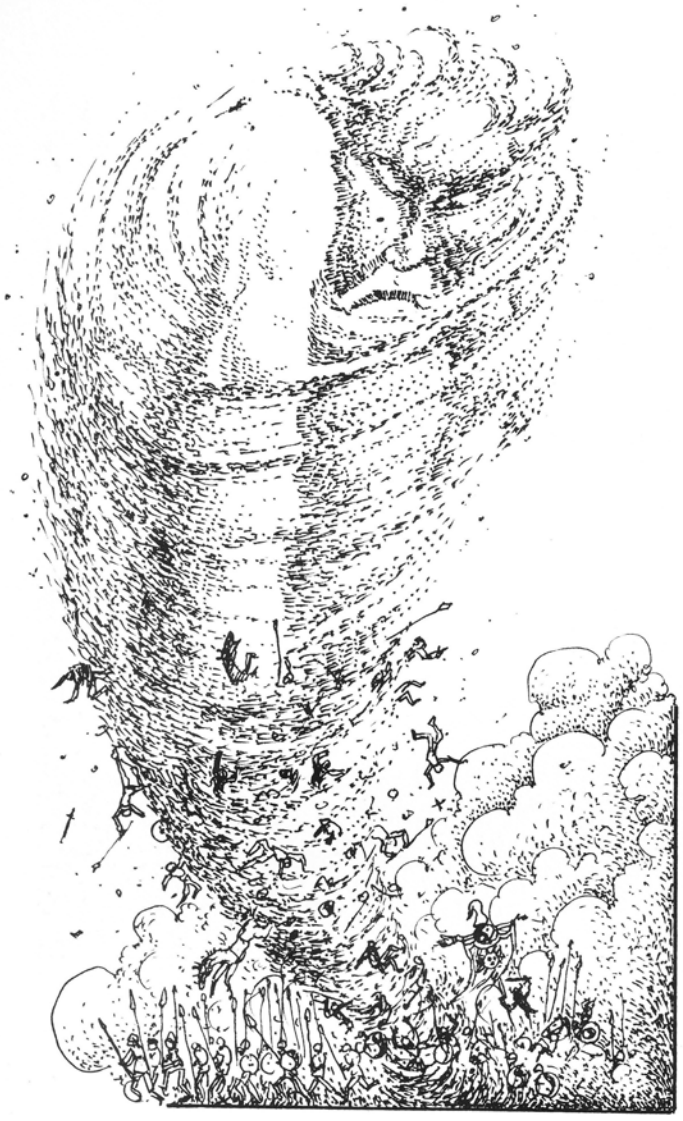
PAINTING LARGE FIGURES

The larger scale miniatures available are often favourites amongst collectors. Dragons especially seem to find the most favour. It is strange how this non-existant beast has established its hold in our mythology. No matter how evil, greedy or depraved, it seems they hold a certain aura of nobility and power. Becaue they are so popular dragons have firmly established their niche in fantasy role-playing games. They may be good, neutral or evil, have different magical abilities or be able to breathe deadly jets of flame, cold or acid, and may be coloured any shade of the rainbow.

There have been two ways of portraying draconids – as stylised dragons or as giant winged lizards. Some people find the latter more effective. The Great Spined Dragon illustrated in this chapter, sculpted by Nick Bibby, can seem real if well assembled and painted.

The first problem with any large model is that it is usually composed of several pieces. When a 'master' is initially sculpted everything fits together perfectly. As soon as the mould is made, however, the heat and pressure combine to distort the original with the result that nothing seems to fit. The solution is to file and glue the pieces together. When everything is completely dry, modelling putty can be used to fill resulting gaps. Some skill is involved at this point since the surface has to appear unblemished and any effects on the model have to be reproduced in the putty. One advantage of using the putty is that it does

Dragon.



The Whirlwind, John Blanche.

strengthen the bond formed by the glue which occasionally may be somewhat tenuous.

Once assembled, the model is ready for painting. It is undercoated in the usual fashion and left to dry. The next painting session is, however, different from that for a small figure. There is no reason why different types of paint would not be used on the same miniature since there is a far larger surface to be covered. Effects sometimes need to be invented: for instance, dragons to look good almost wet, with dry leathery wings. Trial and error is, as always, the best teacher. You will find that a base colour of oil, with highlights in watered-down acrylic, gives a shiny texture to raised areas, and a grainy, dark look to folds. Making wings from absorbent paper covered in water acrylic gives a leathery look.

This effect is best demonstrated on the Great Spined Dragon. This particular model can be difficult to put together and takes quite a lot of filling. After gluing the pieces together the various gaps were filled in with modelling putty and when this began to dry the surface was textured to reproduce the detail on the metal. The miniature has no in-built wings, as they have been left empty for the modeller to provide. The model was undercoated and then a base colour was painted on. Since the sculptor has given the model the look of a lizard green was chosen as the most 'natural' shade for the monster. The base colour was not as dark as it would have been for a smaller model. Since the figure is so much larger than, for example, a 25 mm warrior, the shades are correspondingly less deep.

The desired effect was to make the skin look as if it fitted tightly but could become baggy if a limb was bent. For the necessary grainy texture oil paint was mixed with acrylic and added water and white spirit. The paint was almost a wash – that is, it was very watery with little pigment. A wash fills folds but leaves highlighted areas almost uncovered. Since the undercoat was white, this suggested which parts should take the lightest colours.

Acrylic was mixed to a dark green and then painted over the folds. Since a lot of pigment was used, it remained matt, but from then on a lot of water was added to give a glossy

The Warlock, John Blanche.

finish. It took around thirty coats of paint to bring out all of the detail and leave the necessary shiny surfaces.

Detail, such as barbs under the eyes was painted on and the undercoat for the claws and horns added. The horns took a dark red base, to which was added white acrylic to give a realistic look. There was a need, however, at the end of this to somehow complement the main colour of the model. Since the skin was all the same it looked rather bare. The colour that best complements green is red as a quick check on a colour wheel will reveal. This however did not seem threatening enough, so purple/red was decided on as the appropriate shade to add. This was darkened to give a pigment that was almost black, and painted onto the parts of the beast that showed a stippled surface, especially the head, and onto scales on the legs and sides. The colour was rapidly lightened with white so that the highlights rose bright from a deep base. The eyes were the final detail to be added. They were painted white and over this was applied a thin wash of orange acrylic. A bright white base with a light opaque colour gives a bright sheen, and a small drop of varnish into the eye gives them a gleam. The basic painting was then finished.

The wings were, however, still bare. In the kit, a wing template was included to enable the modeller to provide himself with the material needed. When wings are cast in metal they have to be very thick – if they are made of paper, then they are consequently much thinner and can have any texture that the modeller desires or is able to provide. A good quality art paper was chosen for the wings, which were cut according to the template. To make the wings look bent when folded, the paper was folded many times in order to break the grain, and was then stuck onto the branches of the wings themselves. Once these were securely attached, a wash of wood glue was run over them in order to harden and pattern the surface. A wash of brown-green paint was then added to the wings, allowing most of it to run into the cracks.

Other methods of making wings would be to use plasticard, or smaller pieces of paper with modelling putty, using an interestingly shaped implement to pattern the surface,

Top: *Orc battle, Tony Ackland.*

Bottom left: *Minotaur, Dave Andrews.*

Bottom right: *Giants with tattoos, John Blanche.*

Hobgoblin.

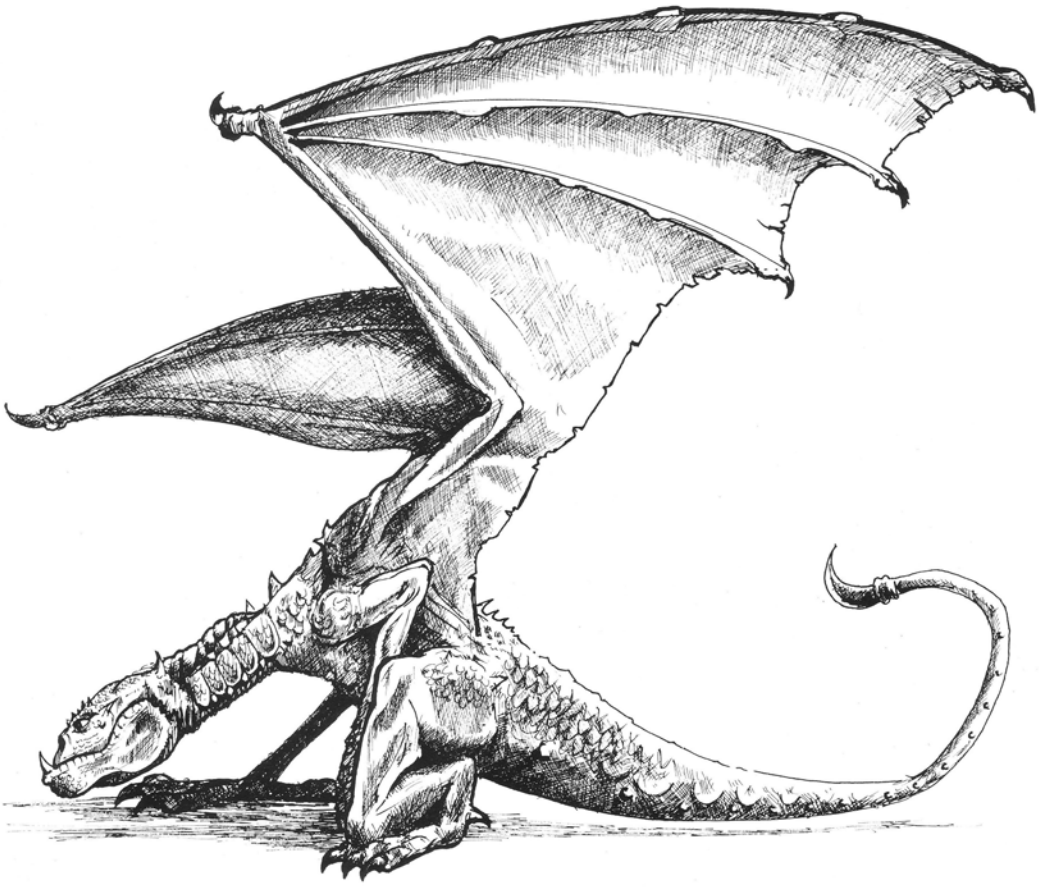
Troll.

then painting it to bring out the required detail.

Large figures allow for more scope for changing items on them without altering the overall appearance of the model. Details, such as flags, banners, cloaks and bags can be made up out of modelling putty. The figurines of giants allow quite simple conversions. Painting-wise, the normal methods may be used, simply remembering that slightly less depth of colour should be included since one is representing a larger size being. Their large size does, however, allow certain surface detail to be painted on, such as tattoos. Drawing pens and ink are especially effective for scribing very thin lines. A good idea is first of all to draw the required tattoo or design onto a sheet of paper in order to see what is to be done.

Ink is quite easy to use in this case. Once painting has been fully completed begin drawing the design. Even if a mistake is made it can quite easily be rectified by painting over with the necessary colour and restarting. Smaller figures can also be used in order to convert larger ones. Most collectors and painters will have a stock of figures that they will never use. This collection can easily number hundreds of miniatures that will never be painted. They are the raw material for altering large figures. If, for example, a giant is carrying a small knapsack at his side, then why not add putty to it in order to increase its size? The upper body half of a gnome can be included to give the impression that the unfortunate victim is attempting to escape from his temporary prison. Because of the size of the sack decorations may be added to it: badges, patches and so on can quite easily be made from putty.

Since large models such as giants often come in several pieces, conversions can be



Great Spined Dragon, Tony Ackland.

attempted, providing the model with extra limbs and heads. These conversions are far easier than one would imagine as long as too much detail does not have to be added. Essential for conversion work is modelling putty, plastic card, good quality paper and a selection of tools: dentists' equipment being particularly apt. Several different types of glue are also helpful.

As long as one has an idea of what is to be done then the best idea is as usual to start from a preparatory sketch. Although detail does not have to be adhered to it makes one think before one begins. One of the most effective items that can be constructed are standards and flags, both for tabletop battles and for dioramas.

The first item to build is the pole that supports the standard. This can be made from wire covered in putty, wood or even a convenient twig. A crossbar can then be attached. Winding cotton around the join is a good way of strengthening the bond and adding realism. A technique pioneered by Kevin Adams and John Blanche, both highly accomplished painters, is to add 'moss' to the branches to make them appear old and used. They do this with a mixture of sand and glue. The resulting stippled surface is painted dark green, then drybrushed with a lighter shade of the same colour, which gives a quite stunning effect.

The flag itself can be made from many materials. The metal of a toothpaste tube can be very effective since it can easily be cut and bent to shape, but paper can be just as effec-

Great Spined Dragon.

tive. Decide upon the shape of the flag, and cut out the necessary piece of material. If the banner is to hang from a crossbar, remember to leave pieces of material for this purpose. It is best to paint the design onto the flag before hanging. Virtually any picture can be used – it is just the same as drawing straight onto paper. Once the flag has been completely finished, then it can be attached and bent to shape. If it is in metal this is quite easy, but do not bend it too much or the paint will flake off. If the design is on paper then a coat of matt varnish will harden the surface and enable it to be set to shape. The finished item is finally set into the figure's hand. Remember that in real life, flags are very heavy and look best with their bases planted firmly into the earth.

Of all large creatures, some of the most difficult to paint are horses. If done well then they can be very impressive, but they are difficult to finish realistically. The main problem is that the models have smooth surfaces when one really has to convey a sense of fur. The miniatures also have to have that semi-gloss look conveyed by a groomed beast. Horses are very rarely only one colour. A little basic information can be a great help. We will divide horses into two basic types: light and dark. Their exact type will affect the colour of mane and tail and various possible special markings. Dark horses are Bays, Browns, Chestnuts and Blacks. Light horses are Duns, Roans and Greys. (A horse is never white but always grey.) Other types include bi-coloured

Minotaur, Troll and Dwarf showing relative sizes.

horses, known as Piebalds and Skewbalds.

Bays are dark brown with black manes and tails. Browns are simply brown all over. Chestnuts can vary from light to dark brown and are often yellowy in colour. Manes and tails are of virtually the same shade. Black is not quite black but instead very deep brown. A pure black horse is very rare, and an effective way of representing it is to shade up the base colour of the horse with blue and then cover the whole model with a fine coat of matt or satin varnish to give a slightly glossy appearance.

A Dun is light yellowy-brown, with a black mane and tail. Roan is grey, often dappled with a deeper shade. Mane and tail as well as lower legs are black. Greys vary from grey upwards to off-white. White horses have coats that differ in appearance from other horses in that they are always matt. Paint should be mixed with some kind of thinner to ensure that a dull finish is retained. If a dapple is required leave the final coat a slight grey and after it is dry add dots of pure white, especially to the fore and hind quarters.

There are two basic methods of painting horses. My favourites involve using oil paint to obtain the necessary texture though normal methods can be used. The only problem with these is, however, that they give a very smooth finish that does not always please the eye. A horse's coat, due to the way in which the fur lies, reflects light in many different ways, giving a slightly false impression of shade that is difficult to

Adventurer on a pony is confronted by a Blue Dragon.

recreate in miniature.

Using oil paints, the first and easiest method is to first undercoat the model, then mix a quantity of the appropriate oil pigment and paint this onto the horse. A cloth can then be used to wipe off the colouring. This will not remove paint lying in folds or creases and it should also 'stain' the undercoat to the appropriate colour. If more depth and light is needed then it can be applied straight to the raised surfaces. The second method is much the same but in reverse. The necessary colouring is painted straight onto the horse and left to dry. A mix of oil is then painted into recesses and the excess wiped off.

Both methods leave a textured surface that fades rapidly from light to dark and yet has the appropriate semi-gloss effect. The only problem with oils is that they take too long to dry. Adding spirit will render them glossy or matt so this is not always an answer.

Special markings, such as blazes or stars (those markings on the front of horses heads), and socks (which are coloured lower parts of their legs), can be added with acrylic after the base coat is dry. These are always white, and so a matt finish should be tried for. There are no hard and fast rules over exactly what markings should go where or

Opposite: *Zombie Dragon, John Blanche.*

with what, but stars, blazes and socks occur only on darker horses. Hooves should be dark if the legs are light and vice-versa. The 'frog' or underside of the foot should be painted black if this is at all necessary.

Unicorns can be painted according to these rules. It can be a good idea to use a light blue base from which to start. This gives the impression that the animal is 'whiter than white', as well it should be. Acrylic can be used as a fine matt finish is wished for. An effective technique is to take an old brush with splayed out hairs, place it into pure white paint and dab this onto raised portions of the model giving the impression of occasional raised hair. If the hooves are painted dark grey and the eyes black, the effect can be stunning. For the horn it is best to use a yellow/brown base and shade up quickly to off white/ivory. A normal Grey has a mane and tail which is slightly yellow in colour, but on a Unicorn a snowy white tail and mane using blue as a base finish the model off to perfection.

THE DIORAMA

Once the basic techniques have been mastered, then the next step that can be tackled is the making of a diorama. These are not as simple as one would imagine. They need careful setting out and a lot of forethought before they are even begun. The dioramas illustrated in this chapter began as concept sketches and were built up using various figures and household articles as well as pre-cast and prepared materials.

The first scene, 'The Web', tells a story. The tale is of an elven prince sent to prove his bravery against a giant monster.

'Isil nen-Girith was the first born of the Kingdom of Faelorn. In the Year of the Swallow, the king began his third long year of rule and started to weary of dealing with the affairs of state. The young prince had therefore to prove himself in the traditional manner – by combat, by word-craft and finally by intelligence.

'The flower of his birth-year had been the rose, and this was therefore his emblem. His four shield-maidens wove him a head band of red flowers and placed it upon his steel helm.

'He rose at dawn on the first trial day and walked out onto the balcony of his room.

Opposite: *Skaven Chaos Ratmen capture a village.*

Above: *Undead Cavalry join the Disciples of the Red Redemption.*

As the sun rose the musty smell of the nearby forest floated to his nostrils and, as ever, the young prince, four hundred and seventy years old by human reckoning, felt the sheer thrill of being alive rush through him. Below in the empty courtyard a standard had been plunged into the earth. The embroidered cloth flapped limply in the early breeze, barely revealing its design: that of a swan, and a tangle of roses. His symbol, and that of his family. Before the day was out, that piece of cloth would witness his first victory.

'Isil felt no fear of his task. The life-spans of elves were so long that their attitudes towards death and pain were somewhat different from that of humans. Pain was a necessary part of life, essential for accentuating pleasure, and death was not so bad, regrettable perhaps sometimes, but a preordained part of life and so not unnatural. Life is beautiful, but worthless if never risked.

'Isil stood, naked, breathing in the lightly perfumed air. Abruptly he turned, went back to his room and took down the decorated scabbard and long sword from the wall. He drew the blade which hissed lightly as it glinted in the shafts of light admitted by the window. The pale blue rune inscribed near the hilt glowed. ''Pa-Eth'' murmured the prince, and the sword began to hum lightly and seemed to vibrate in his hand. He sheathed the magic

Underground maze of death, with Adventurers, Dwarves, Rats, Giants, Zombies, Wizards and Goblins.

weapon, and began to clothe himself. First his loin cloth, then a loose fitting silk shirt. Next a pair of thin leather trousers, a heavier outercoat, a leather collar and leather sleeves. He drew back his hair and tied it into place with a small thong and put on a padded leather cap.

'His armour lay spread out in the adjacent room. The two retainers who would accompany him stood there, already dressed. There was Lernathel, the king's minister with the White Swan embossed upon his leather cuirass, and Senandriol, his cousin and close friend, who would sound the horn that would mark the beginning of his fight.

'He stood and allowed the two to strap on the plates of metal until he was completely encased and then turned for his green cape to be clipped on. Finally Senandriol presented him with his sword. He acknowledged its receipt with a nod and buckled the wide belt around his waist. The familiar weight felt reassuring and despite the heaviness of the armour Isil imagined that he could leap and touch the painted ceiling far above.

'He leaned and picked up his decorated helm, and then made his way through the door, heading down towards the courtyard. The palace seemed deserted. All the doors were closed, all guards gone. A sudden feeling of claustrophobia welled

Medieval battle scene.

up in Isil's throat and he nearly screamed. He knew that everyone was awake and that they were simply sitting in their chamber, waiting. Waiting for him to come back. That was when there would be cheers and flowers and music and noise, but now there was simply overpowering silence.

'Several centuries passed before he finally reached the bottom of the stairs and looked out of the Great Arch. There, untended and unbridled stood the three great horses that pulled his chariot. As soon as the beasts caught sight of him they bowed and moved forward. Behind them rolled his transportation: a chariot bearing large white wings. Isil mounted and his two retainers climbed on behind him.

'There was a moment's silence. No bird soared through the blue arch of the sky trapped by the encircling walls of the court. Suddenly Senandriol blew the horn and the pure, deep note flew around the yard in ever-higher circles. The horses started forward at an easy canter and Isil had to hold the front shield to stay upright.

'The beasts knew their destination. Isil did not. He had to wait as they circled the forest and began to approach the Mathranond; the Dark Wood. Soon the company pulled close to the dead trees and eventually stopped. Isil was surprised to see a thin figure awaiting them. It was an Elven woman, dressed in purple: the

Great Spined Dragon, a prize winning diorama by Nick Bibby.

colour for death or mourning. She held clutched in her right hand a corked red vial. Lemathel and Senandriol ignored her presence, but Isil stared. She returned his look, extended the vial and said ''For the poison'', then turned and looked towards the path that led into the wood.

'Lenandriol waited until Isil dismounted before going through the ritual chant in front of the priest and, when finished, he bowed. ''Your task, O Prince, is to bring back the tail feathers of the Manan which resides in the centre of the Mathranond. You must be returned here at sundown with the trophy to have successfully completed your task. Many beasts reside in that cheerful place. Beware.''

'Isil turned and moved forward. Behind him the horses stamped and whinnied softly. Directly in front of him was a large web in which sat a giant spider. ''Pa-Eth'' murmured the Prince, and began to draw his humming sword.'

The diorama freezes the story at this point; Isil nen-Girtith in the act of drawing his sword, the elven woman and the two retainers looking on and the chariot awaiting the Prince's return.

The scene began with a concept drawing. This was, as it turned out, somewhat different from the finished model since it was originally intended that the Prince was to be fighting a spider hanging from a large bluebell. It is of little importance what the final model portrays as long as the initial idea of what one is trying to do is clear. Having completed the initial rough sketches the relevant figures were placed on a piece of paper to work out where they would best complement each other. Composing a diorama is like drawing a picture, in that there have to be contrasts of light and dark, contrasts of colour and always something interesting to look at. The viewer's eye needs to be led inward.

Once it was decided to make the wood very dark and to use the white chariot as contrast, the other figures were set in their positions and the point where the spider would sit decided. The back of the diorama was still somewhat bare and so one more

Top right: *Slaughter at Skull Gate.*

Bottom right: *The Web.*

monster was added, not easily visible from the front, to give an added dimension.

The original idea would not work, so a piece of mounting card was taken, figures were fitted onto it and it was cut down to the necessary size. The figures' positions were drawn on this as a reference plan.

The painting of the figures then began. The horses and the chariot needed to be very white to offset the darkness of the woods. To achieve two different effects, the horses were shaded with grey and the wings with blue. The wheels and shield were painted black, again for contrast, and the shield and harness of the chariot varnished to achieve a glossy effect.

The Prince was painted dark with a bright green cloak so as not to be immediately visible. The retainers were finished in brighter colours since they would have to be noticeable even though they were off-set towards the edge of the diorama. The elven woman, my personal favourite of the group, was finished in purple and her eyes were painted large and very dark to give her an intense look.

The 'Pumpkin Monster' was then finished in very dark colours so as to blend in with the trees; the head was painted orange, and the mouth and eyes were filled with fluorescent green paint to give a glowing look in a complementary colour.

Putting the completed figures to one side, there were then the problems of the web and the Spider. Commercially produced metal arachnids always seem to have over-large legs and bodies, so it was started from scratch, building a spider up from wire, putty and thread. Once dry it was painted light brown and given a wash of dark sienna for depth of colour. After this was finished it was covered in several coats of varnish to harden the completed product.

All that was needed now was a web from which it could hang. The only thing available that was not too thick was transparent

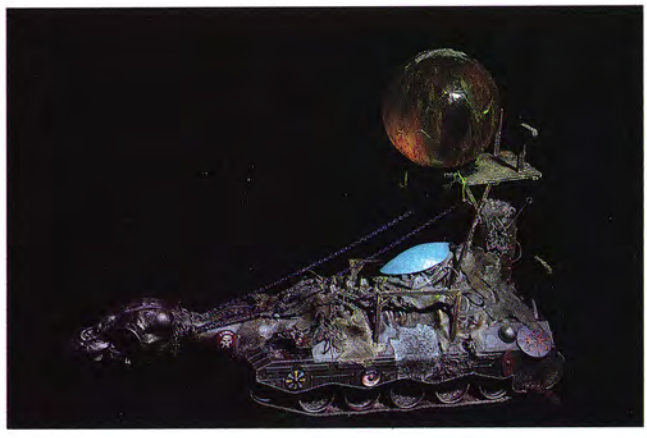
Above and left: *Mutant, Eternal Champions and the Bride and Groom.*

fishing line. Cuttings from a dead plant make good trees: they are sufficiently dark and are quite rigid. Two long twigs were taken and leant against each other, their bases fixed with putty and then fixed together. A long piece of twine was attached between the branches, and to it was stuck anchoring twine to form the basis of the web. Finally line was cut into pieces and, working from the centre outwards, several circles constructed. Onto this was then stuck the spider. The branches were then, together with their base, fixed onto the mounting card.

Modelling putty was then applied. Branches were stuck into this to form the wood, larger and thicker twigs at the back to form a sort of wall, smaller and thinner branches at the front to achieve gradation. The miniatures were then fixed to the card,

Top left: *Half Moon Orc catapult.*

Right: *Nick Bibby's Troll diorama and tank.*



and putty built up around their bases so that they seemed to be standing on the earth rather than in it. The chariot was, however, set a little deeper into the putty to convey the impression of weight, and two furrows were pushed into the surface to mark where the wheels had passed.

The floor of the woods was painted dark brown and small pieces of moss stuck to it before a covering of peat was added to the surface. Good quality potting earth is dry, very fine, and contains tiny twigs which are perfect for giving the impression of a dry, mud and leaf strewn, surface. The grass was completed by painting the surface dark green, then dotting the area in a lighter and lighter colour. Small tree stumps were added and finally small amounts of 'flock' – dyed sawdust – were stuck on.

After all of this, the flag for the retainers was painted. It was made from art paper

wrapped around a flag-pole. Whilst the paper was flat, the design was chosen and drawn on. Painting such things as flags and banners is very easy, and can only look difficult. Once finished the flag was bent to represent folds, and given a coat of varnish to hold it rigid. A base was found upon which the card could be mounted. The surface of the wood was roughened with a craft knife and the diorama glued on. The name plate was purchased and inscribed. The choice of title can be difficult. For this particular diorama the name was chosen so that people would look into the scene and see the Spider, the name then becoming self-evident. A name-plate is an effective but not too expensive finishing touch for any model and it is well worth investing in one.

'The Web' is a diorama that primarily uses the horizontal plane. 'Skull Gate' uses the vertical plane to a far greater extent. The concept behind the scene was provided by the box in which the figures were contained. They were intended to be used together and so required no conversion. Two items from a range of plaster buildings made by Fortifications were perfect for use in dioramas.

The humans were knights fighting their way into the den of some beast-men, who were controlled by a shaman. The problems came in setting the figures in natural poses as there is little available space on the steps. There was also the problem of the figures' bases. Nowadays, miniatures have the refinement of 'slotta-bases', plastic bases into which fit metal flanges on the feet of the figurines. In 'Skull Gate' the miniatures had large metal bases which had to be removed by simply filing them away, a long and tedious process. Metal flanges need simply to be cut away and so are far easier to use. Since filing required fairly rough handling, base removal had to be done before work began, which gave the added difficulty of how to base the figures for painting. In the end the miniatures were stuck into plasticene on a cork allowing fairly free handling.

Models were chosen and a concept drawing set out. Using the Ahketon casts helped in that the territory requiring work was already defined. The drawing would simply give ideas as to where to place the figurines. It was important not to clutter the steps. The diorama should show that a fight had taken place and that reinforcements were just about to come from the entrance of the den whilst the beastman, Shamon, showered spells down from above.

The plaster casts had arrived somewhat crudely finished. Firstly all rough edges were scraped down and then the central hole in the steps was cut out. Judicious drilling and filling achieved what was necessary and if placed on a dark surface the hole did look as if it led away to nowhere.

The skull was again cleaned and the teeth hollowed out. Before painting both pieces were covered in a thin layer of varnish. Plaster is very porous and since acrylic paint

was being used it needed some surface to which to cling. The pieces were covered in a very dark grey mix, taking care to fill every crevice. The rocks were to be brown, with a slightly shiny surface as if they had been worn over the years.

The stone was painted with lighter and lighter shades of grey until it was finished. To achieve the shiny effect, gloss paint was used on the rocks and again toned up on every application. The skull was then tackled. It was meant to be the colour of old bone. The base coat was dark brown, to which was added yellow and white. Gradually the colour was built up, leaving lots of dark paint in the crevices. The teeth were painted off-white and the eye sockets filled with black to make them hollow. The basic painting had then been finished and it was time to fit the pieces to a base.

A block of wood was cut to the right size to support the skull and its sides were covered with plasticard. This is plastic sheeting with raised masonry embossed on its surfaces. The steps were fixed to its front and all gaps filled. The skull was not yet fully attached as figures would be fitted in the corridor.

The base of the passageway was covered in peat to give a dusty feel and the painted beastmen were placed within its confines. To dirty the skull, a burning sprue of hard plastic was placed under the mouth. The resultant fumes are poisonous, and burning plastic is very dangerous so care has to be exercised, but the smoke produced blackens any surface very effectively. A cloth was used to wipe away most of the residue but left enough for it to be noticeable. Onto the front of the skull was then painted a crude red pentacle as if it had been placed there by the beast-men themselves. Once the skull was fixed, ivy was made from modelling putty. This had two purposes: the first was to draw the eye away from the bareness of the walls and the second was to help bind the skull and its support together.

The figures could now be added according to the concept drawing, using an epoxy adhesive. Since their bases had already been removed, this process was very easy. The diorama was always intended to stay in one place; if it was to be handled, the figures would have been pinned to their base.

Glue that was showing was painted over to remove its glossiness, bloodstains were added in the appropriate places and more tiny pieces of moss fixed to represent plants. A name plate was again placed on the front of the diorama to finish it off.

The blood was reproduced using artist's ink. This had blood's qualities in that it shines on a bright surface and goes dull when on dark. Blood blackens very quickly; the older the blood stain, the more black should be added. Acrylic black can be used to thicken and darken it if necessary. It should also be remembered that understatement in such things is always the key. A few well-placed drops of blood are far more effective than great gouts of gore.

John Blanche at work.

MASTER PAINTERS

No one painter can claim to know all possible secrets, methods or techniques. All artists benefit from the criticism and help of others. In this chapter painters describe their attitudes and approaches to figure painting.

Kevin Adams

I always treat painting miniatures as a hobby and not as an awkward job. Taking that attitude will only turn what is a relaxing and rewarding pastime into a chore and the standard of your painting will certainly suffer. I will not go in to too much detail over the paints that I use, though effects have been achieved with acrylics, alkyds, inks and water colours. About the only paints that I avoid are oils, since they take so long to dry and are just not worth it.

A good paint brush is essential – sable being the best. When choosing yours, ask for a protective collar for the tip. If none is available, sections of cut up drinking straw will do equally well. Always store your brushes upright; always clean between different colours and always make sure that they are cleaned properly at the end of each painting session. If necessary, rinse through in warm soapy water – not hot, or this will crimp the bristles. If acrylic and enamel paints are being used do not use the same brush, instead, obtain two brushes and label them accordingly.

It is best to use the tip of the brush to paint with – if you push it too far into the mix, the

Imaginary Landscape, John Blanche.

Green Dragon, Kevin Adams.

paint will dry at the base and cause the bristles to fan out. This is useful for dry-brushing but little else. Never leave your brush in a thinners bottle as the bristles will bend out of shape, and unless you want to paint around corners, the brush will not be much use. There is actually an oriental art form where tiny boxes with glass bases are painted. The bottom of the box can only be reached by painting between the glass and the base, requiring a bent brush. If you have enough damaged equipment, you might consider taking up this hobby!

Once the relevant tools have been assembled, the figure cleaned and undercoated it is time to start. Patience is the greatest priority for painters to learn. It is sensible to paint only two models at a time, for in this way, one can be drying whilst the other is being painted. You will learn that painting cannot be rushed and it is definitely not on for the painter to pursue his hobby when concentration is bad. You will need to overcome frustration and temporary set-backs, and patience will be rewarded with good results.

After painting is finished, it is often wise to give the figure a coat of varnish, as with constant handling the model can chip or the paint be rubbed off. If your model had any metallic paint in it you *must not* varnish for at least two days, or the paint will lift off and smear the rest of the model. It is an idea to use a good polyurethane varnish followed by a matt coat, as this protects the model but eliminates unnecessary shine. When handling models in general pick them up by the bases, as this makes sure that they do not get covered in fingermarks which could eventually mess up the colours. This is an especially good idea if you are handling someone else's work. It is difficult to explain how annoying it is for someone to walk up and remove several hours' work by grabbing the miniature by its head.

If you have decided to paint, and have read details of how to go about it, followed all of the expert's advice and have still come up with something that looks like a mixture between an amoeba and a psychedelic goblin dressed in cobwebs under disco lights, you have three options. They are:

1. Learn by your mistakes. Benefit from your experience and start again. My first efforts were not too inspiring – but I persevered.
2. Try an alternative style or invent your own methods.
3. Advertise your services as a painter of amoebas and psychedelic goblins dressed in cobwebs under disco lights!

Above and left: *Hobgoblins and Goblins.*

John Blanche

By now you will have realised that there are many ways to achieve a standard of figure painting that you might previously have thought impossible. It does require a certain degree of sacrifice on your part. Effort, concentration, practice and patience are just as important as technique and materials. Indeed your attitude plays a more important role in creating a connoisseur model than does the equipment that you use. Good results can be achieved with only a few tools; there is no real need to arm yourself with a warehouse full of different materials.

The methods that I use for painting individual figures are far too time-consuming to apply to whole armies of models. Be prepared to spend time with the chosen miniature. I might use up to twenty hours painting just one figurine, excluding converting or the finishing of standards; so be patient. Choose your figure carefully, and only pick one that inspires you since it is very easy to be too ambitious. Many painters embark on mammoth projects, whole armies engaged in vicious skirmishes in underground tunnels only to finish the first two models and get bored.

I attach the model to an independent base, such as an old paint tin or pot and use a dot of super glue to hold the figure on so that it can easily be removed after painting. With the advent of plastic bases the problem is starting to disappear as these can act as the working base.

Now, look at your figure to see if there is any conversion work that you would like to

undertake. Do not try too much, as heaps of spikes, severed heads, swords and axes can hide the figure and destroy the very qualities that made it attractive in the first place.

Adding the head from one figure to another makes a very satisfactory conversion and is probably one of the simplest ways of altering your figure. Make sure that the new head sits properly on the body. If a very strong bond is needed, drill a hole into the figure and pin the head in, securing with epoxy. When all additions have been finished all gaps may be filled with modelling putty and the surface textured.

Putty can also be used for remodelling; making up rolls, pouches, new armour and so on. The best guide is to look at miniatures in your collection to see how the professional sculptors have achieved their effects. Armour is probably the hardest to model, but chain mail is easier than you would imagine. Place a layer of putty onto a figure, then press a series of holes into it using a pin or needle. The next line is pressed in parallel but in the opposite direction. This is time consuming but effective!

When all conversion work has been completed the figure should be left to dry properly. Painting on to partially dry glue can lead to cracking as the surface shrinks.

Once prepared an undercoat is very necessary. The finish will last longer and look brighter. Once again let the coat dry completely. Do not use too much paint for the base colour or else it can clog up fine detail.

My own technique of painting is based on blending colours on the figures themselves. For this I use spirit-based paint. Water-based paints are good but are hard to blend subtly. I try to avoid gaudiness in figure painting, using a minimum of colours. These are: white, black, bright red, plum, yellow, dark green, mid-blue, silver, gold and chestnut brown. One can derive most other colours from these bases. Flesh colour is best mixed and not bought as a commercial preparation as you can control the colour that you want and all your figures will not have the same flesh tones. The colour can be mixed using yellow, white and red with a touch of green to tone down brightness. A tiny amount of any colour may be added to give extra skin tone. White is generally added to all these

colours to give highlights.

When painting begins the base colours are added first, painting slowly and keeping to the area to be covered with that particular colour. This has a two-fold purpose; one, that too many layers of paint obscure detail and two, that painting more carefully than absolutely necessary trains both eye and hand. Once the base colours are touch dry you can begin to shade the figure, carefully following the lines of creases, hollows and underparts of limbs.

The first stage of blending begins at this point. One brush has colour on it, the other only thinners. Taking each crease and shadow in turn, the pigment is applied and then with the thinners brush the edges are drawn together so that a gradation of tone occurs. If you have no experience of this technique, do not be disappointed if a mess results. Try again and vary the amounts of pigment and thinners until a pleasing blend occurs. When the area of shadow has been applied and is thoroughly dry, then the highlights can be painted. The same method is used except with a lighter colour. At the end of this a three dimensional effect should be visible on your model. Finally, using thinned black or dark brown and the thinnest detail brush, follow the edges of clothes and equipment very carefully.

I usually wedge my hands in position during this stage so that the only movement occurs in the fingers that control the brush. I, in fact, use my thumbnail as a palette so as to have to change my position as little as possible. The only problem is, of course, that I end up with a black finger nail.

When all the base colours have been shaded and highlighted, the figure's equipment, straps and armour may be painted. Shields are perhaps the best fun to paint and you can go to town, letting your imagination rule what is to be portrayed. Copying pictures from works of art, adverts or magazines can give rise to a whole series of new ideas.

Finally comes the face. I have left this until last as it is the one area that can really bring a model to life. I favour a simplistic approach, as a real live man shrunk to twenty-five millimetres would appear very strange. The same shading techniques as ever are used to bring out detail. I do find, however, that fantasy figures need very dark eye sockets, almost black for evil creatures. When dry, add the eye white, then the pupil. For this, I use a 0.13 Radiograph pen, though a fine tipped brush will do with a lot of care. Finish the eye with dark lines around the eye itself, the top line being slightly thicker than the bottom. This lining is the finest that you will have to attempt. It often goes wrong, but you will have to start over again if it does. The lips may now be added. A good lip colour can be achieved by mixing a small amount of red to flesh colour. Experiment with lip shapes to give different expressions.

As you become more proficient at this technique you can experiment and push the limits of detail even further. For instance, you can shade the white of the eyes, try different coloured irises and highlight the pupil. The lips can be highlighted, and teeth painted in. A 'five o'clock shadow' painted using a thin black wash will make the hero

Above and right: *Red dragon guarding his hoard, Green Dragon and Mutants.*

look tough and even chin stubble can be added using a thin radiograph pen.

After finishing your figure you can varnish it. If you use polyurethane varnish, it will protect very well although it can look 'toy-soldierish' because it is shiny. Matt varnish, which is granular in composition lacks this shine but collects dirt easier. Three or four coats of polyurethane high gloss varnish applied to a twenty-five millimetre model creates a porcelain-like quality, and gives the colour a clean depth, as well as being very pleasant to the touch.

All that remains now is basing. Variations are limitless, and over the years I have experimented with card, plastic sheets, coins, washers and various other shapes. Citadel's 'slotta bases' save a lot of time. Adding putty to the surface and including pebbles, toadstools, skulls and weapons gives them character. The base is best left matt. The lighter it is, the lighter the figure will appear.

Once everything has been finished you will probably have the next miniature planned in your head. This one will be better still, since the only way to achieve excellence is by patience, enthusiasm and dedication.

HINTS & IDEAS

There are many techniques that can be used to improve dioramas, single figures and tabletop units. Some are purely cosmetic, such as copying designs onto shields and equipment, whilst others use technology as their source.

Fantasy modellers tend still to ignore light as a useful item in their bag of tricks. Fibre optics, for example, are incredibly easy to use and can be very effective. They are generally available in lengths of one meter or more and in various diameters. The bigger the diameter, the more light is conducted. They look like thin, transparent, flexible plastic rods. Upon obtaining them, the first thing to do is to clean them up. The ends are often rough and will consequently conduct less light. Rubbing both ends over wet and dry paper soon cures this fault. The more polished that they are, the better they will work and so it is worth putting some effort and time into the process. If a slightly larger end is needed then the tips should be placed carefully near a source of heat or pressed vertically on to a smooth, clean, heated surface. The result is a polished, flat or concave end, ideal for use.

The fibres are mostly viewed end on but one might occasionally need to view them from the side. In this case, sand the fibre at an angle. The light will then emerge from the unsanded side. To transmit the most light, the receiving end should be placed as close to the filament of the bulb as possible. Several fibres may obtain light from one source. Simply group them together, using a box

Left: *Gothic Amazon, John Blanche.*

holding the source if necessary.

The fibres can be bent to some extent. An explanation of how they work is useful at this point. The fibres are made of a light conducting polymer core, with an outer layer made of a plastic that conducts badly. When light enters it is 'bounced' down the fibre until it exits at the uncovered end. If light hits the cladding directly then it can escape. The smaller the diameter of the fibre then the more it can be bent. Fibres can even be used underwater! As long as the source is adequately protected they can be used in virtually any medium as long as it does not attack the material of the fibre itself. Their maximum working temperature is seventy-five degrees centigrade. If alternative colours are required then filters can be used on a white light source. As long as these are fairly heat resistant they can be placed very close to the source.

Fibres have many uses. They can light up inaccessible areas, throw beams onto relevant parts of dioramas or form interesting effects. One could, for instance, have made a diorama where a large water monster has just erupted from a swamp to attack an adventurer in a boat. The diorama could be cut into a wooden base. If the bottom of this was hollowed out, then a bulb could be placed there, powered by two small batteries. Fibres leading out could be placed through holes in the wood. If the water was made of resin, then it would be semi-transparent. A green filter would ensure that, if the fibres were just under the surface, the spots of green would be seen to give the impression of will o' the wisps common in areas of rotting vegetation.

If a scene had been made up that featured a dark forbidding cave, then a group of several fibres could be concealed at the bottom linked to a red filter. The glow would then be seen and would give an effect of a fire just out of sight.

Resin has been mentioned in the above examples. It is a good medium for the representation of water. If a simple trickle is to be portrayed then varnish can be painted over a thin watercourse, but large pools require a different method. Resin normally comes in two parts. Mix these together after the diorama is prepared. On the bottom of the pool-to-be place a floor of sand, tiny twigs and green vegetation. Pour in the mix until the pool is half full. Onto this surface may be placed more 'weeds', fish made of putty and painted and all manner of other items. The rest of the mix is then added. Once dry the resin is semi-transparent and the viewer can look through to the bottom. The effect, if well-done, can be unbelievably realistic.

It is not necessary to go to such lengths to improve dioramas. Many cosmetic details can be added using a paintbrush and assorted odds and ends. It is a very good idea to obtain a small wooden case, such as an old cigar box, in which to store the interesting bits and pieces that one can come across. Unusual stones, broken jewellery, old pieces of model kits, all can be used in a diorama if

2 views of John Blanche's 3-headed Minotaur.

they are added correctly and well painted. Small pieces of chain are effective if covered in glue then coiled into position before being painted in a wash of black with spots of ruddy orange, to give the impression of an old rusted coil of chain links. Small rhinestones can be placed on treasure piles and covered in a thin black wash. This takes the over-bright shine off the stones and adds depth. Dragons' hoards are often livened up by this technique.

The 'Odds and Ends' box can be resorted to as often as one wants – indeed some items that have been chanced upon prompt the construction of a diorama. At a French convention, I came upon a science-fantasy diorama. It was an old, slightly bent soft drink can embedded in a bank of vegetation. It had been hollowed out, doors and windows added, and a group of gnomes were having an animated discussion in front of this luxurious metal home! All that one needs are the necessary ideas and a bit of patience.

It is a good plan, both on tabletop units and individual figures, to choose a recurring theme or insignia and use it over and over again. On groups of miniatures for use in battles this gives the unit a visual rhythm essential for realism. On single figures it looks effective as it gives the impression that the character portrayed by the miniature has 'lived' and put together co-ordinated equipment.

Shields are often a good point at which to start. Many people seem to be put off by the

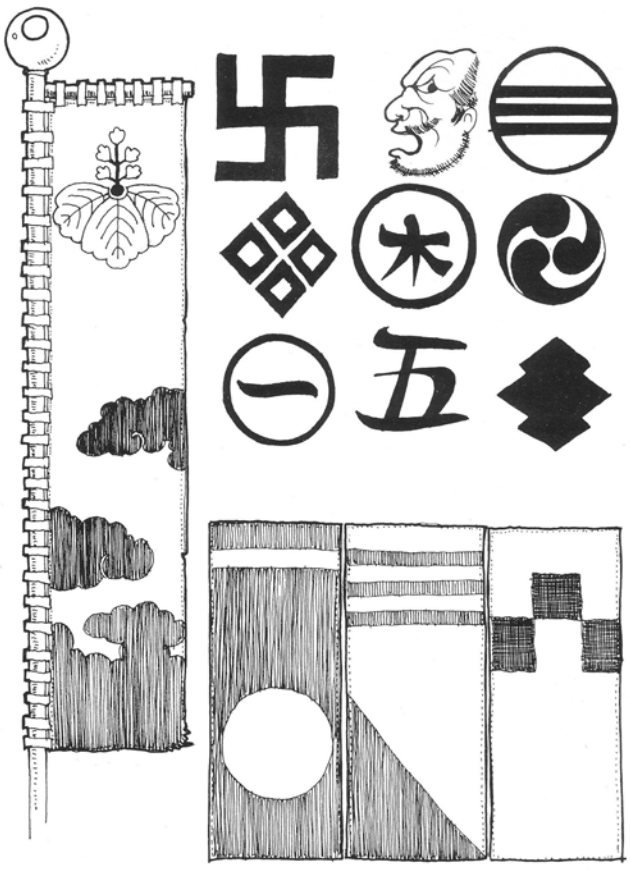
Above and right: *Kaleb Daark with Dreadaxe, Orcs with their battle colours, Adventurer and Ratman.*

prospect of painting shields and yet they are surprisingly easy. One has a large bare surface available that needs no shading and simply cries out for the application of detail.

One of the most difficult aspects of this process is, however, finding an original design. At this point, a visit to the local library is very useful. A book on heraldry provides an astonishing number of possible designs. The same can be said for banners and flags on those figures, either cast as, or converted to, standard bearers. Virtually any design can be used.

One of my favourites is John Blanche's 'Chaos Minotaur'. Despite the close attentions of his daughter and several repair jobs, it is still beautiful. An indication of its worth is that it won the 'Masters Painting Competition' at Games Day 1985 – the European Championship as it were. As yet there is no World Championship, but I am sure that any miniature anywhere would be hard put to beat it.

The creature bears on its flag the likeness of the Mona Lisa. According to Mr Blanche, this is the Minotaur's long lost love. It is astonishing how accurate this tiny representation is of Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece. As a rejoinder, Charley Elliott responded by converting a Troll into a standard bearer with the image of a worried John Blanche upon it. Again the accuracy of the likeness is quite disconcerting. Until someone finds a method of placing photographs onto banners and shields, I was not sure that anyone could do better. Then Kevin Adams managed to put a



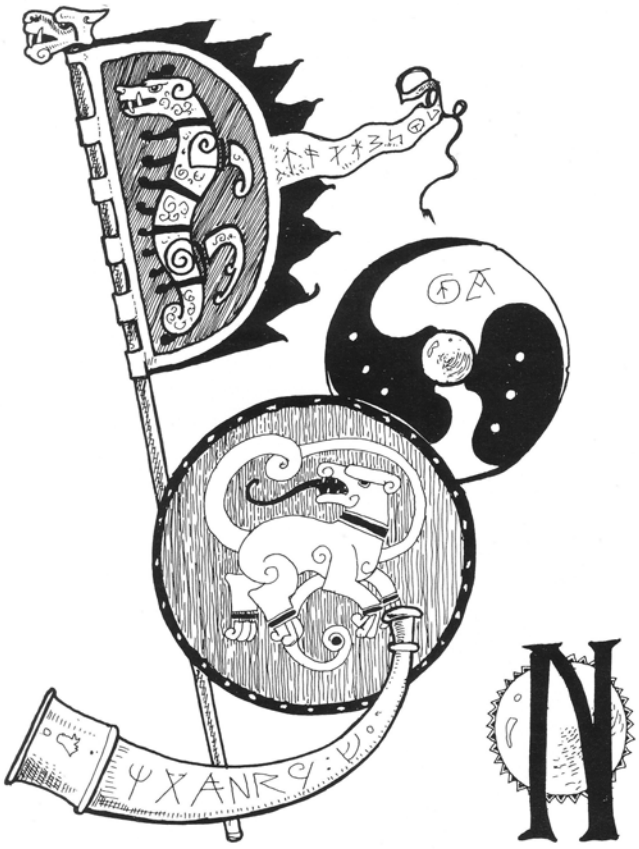
Left: *Baneful banners, John Blanche.*

Right: *Samurai designs, John Blanche.*

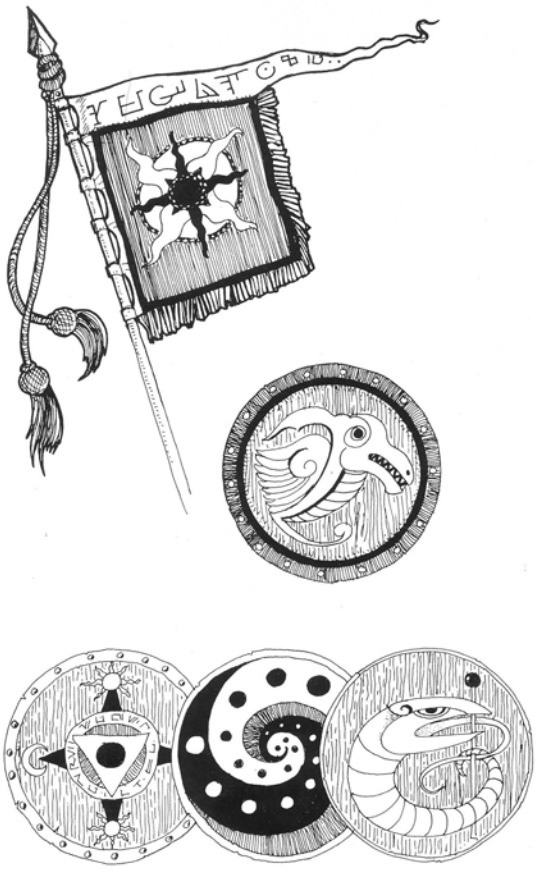
portrait of his mother onto a Goblin's shield. This has a radius of some five millimeters and yet the picture was recognisable in every detail. One may question these people's sanity, but one has to appreciate their skill.

Of course the painter does not hope to go that far. Sketch designs such as a quarter moon onto a piece of paper and then paint this picture onto a shield. Once the base detail has been painted then experimentation can begin, such as adding eyes, nose, mouth and teeth, or background colours in different shades. One can use either a brush or a radiograph pen for detail.

Shield designs are very effective and though time-consuming should at least be experimented with. They are certainly the most noticeable part of a miniature. From a



Left: *Norse flags, John Blanche.*



Right: *Gnomes flags and shields, Trish Morrisson.*

few feet a figure is just a coloured blob of metal, and delicate shading is of absolutely no use whatsoever. A shield, especially in light colours, does attract the eye and is one of the easiest things to achieve on a model. A real shield was normally constructed of layers of wood with a metal rim, covered in hide or cloth that was then painted with a design. This helped in the identification of its owner during a tournament or battle. Heraldry became a highly complex series of designs using descriptive names derived from Latin. There is no need in fantasy to adhere to these rules, though they can be useful.

One can dirty shield and equipment once finished. A technique that I use is to paint a shield white, add a design and then dirty with fake blood, using artist's ink. If the figure is meant to have just emerged from a hard fight then I use scarlet, but if several hours are meant to have elapsed, then dark red is most effective. Semi-transparent ink shines when on white and dries to a shiny finish which is very noticeable. A brush with a small amount of ink on the tip is dabbed around the relevant areas. One interesting effect is to place a blood-stained handprint onto a surface. Use your own hand as an example. The first time that I attempted this, I covered my hand in black ink, pressed it onto a piece of paper and then copied the design. It took me a long time to get clean again but it gave me an accurate idea of what to paint.

Eagles, lions, tigers' heads, suns, moons,

skulls, fists and crosses are all good designs to use. Employ colours that will clash. Black and red are good for evil characters, whilst white is most apt for those of goodly nature. It is up to you to experiment to find out the best combinations.

Radiograph pens have been mentioned previously in the book and a word about them would seem relevant. They are very thin tipped pens; ink is transmitted by means of a central reservoir through a porous conductor to the tip, which is held rigid by a metal tube. They come in all sizes. The smaller they are, however, the more likely they are to clog up. In general they need a lot of looking after, and are very expensive. The effects that they provide do, however, make them sometimes worth it. If ink is flowing freely they allow an incredible amount of control, especially if one is trying to inscribe a message of doom and destruction onto a weapon. With a brush one is never sure when the paint will dry or quite what thickness of stroke one is going to achieve. Radiographs allow controlled detail in a variety of colours. They cannot be shaded however and are therefore only useful for blocking in images. They can be used for writing messages in strange runes on white shields. Any imaginary alphabet can be used, or the words can be in English, with special reference to death, destruction or glory. After a shield has been finished it is a good idea to give it a coat of gloss varnish. Although not altogether realistic it does accentuate and protect detail.

Any image placed on a shield can also be painted elsewhere. If, for instance, one is putting together a unit of heavy Orcish infantry, then their insignia could be a coiled red serpent. The unit might be composed of five skirmishers, ten heavy infantrymen and five archers. The skirmishers might have the insignia on their weapons and small shields. The heavy infantrymen would have larger markings on their shields and smaller ones on their helmets, whilst the archers would have the design on their quivers. These tiny details can be very useful in making a unit look 'realistic'. There is no reason why the insignia should not be changed or altered, especially as the result of a victory over an opposing unit.

Make use of any ideas or material that you come across, and try to keep a 'log' of any such information. I have a large folder into which go photocopies or originals of any useful artwork, articles or designs that I might possibly use. During a painting session I am sometimes stumped as to what to do next. Opening the file is the answer which gets me going again very quickly.

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